



Undergraduate Assembly
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Constitution of the Undergraduate Assembly

Established September 24, 1972

Revised by Referendum on December 11, 2009

We, the undergraduate students of the University of Pennsylvania, in order to provide a means for responsible and effective participation in the organization and control of the affairs of the University, do hereby establish this Constitution for the Undergraduate Assembly of the University of Pennsylvania.

Article I - Membership

1. All full-time undergraduates at the University of Pennsylvania shall be eligible for membership in all organs of the Undergraduate Assembly (UA).

Article II - The Undergraduate Assembly

2. The Undergraduate Assembly shall speak as the one representative voice of all undergraduates on affairs of their concern, and shall express its views on any matter, which its members deem of general University interest, passing resolutions and making recommendations thereto. It shall have power, under the Statutes of the Trustees, to make recommendations directly to the President, Provost, and the Trustees, and to request reports from the university administration.
3. The UA shall be an elective body consisting of the UA President, the UA Vice-President, and members elected from five (5) mutually exclusive constituencies: the new students (inclusive of the freshmen class and the transfer student population admitted that year), the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Nursing Science, the Wharton School, and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.
4. The number of representatives from each constituency shall be divided proportionally by the Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC) on the basis of enrollments at the commencement of the academic year using the following procedure:
 - a. The total number of seats on the UA shall be calculated by dividing the total number of undergraduate students enrolled in the current academic year by 300, and rounding up to the nearest odd number.
 - b. Each constituency shall be guaranteed at least one seat.

- c. The remaining seats shall be allocated by the equal proportions method, resulting in a listing of the constituencies according to a priority value, calculated by dividing the population of each constituency eligible to vote by the geometric mean of its current and next seats that assigns the remaining seats.
5. UA members shall be elected as follows:
 - a. The members from the new student constituency shall be elected no later than six weeks after the commencement of Fall semester (this election to be hereafter referred to as “the New Student election”), and shall hold office until the beginning of next Transition Meeting.
 - b. Members from all other constituencies shall be elected no later than two weeks prior to the commencement of Reading Days in the Spring Semester (this election to be hereafter referred to as “the General Election”), and shall hold office from their election until the beginning of the next Transition Meeting.
 - c. The NEC, by and with the advice of the UA, shall establish all other regulations pertaining to UA and Class Board elections, including but not limited to their timing, qualifications for candidacy, qualifications of voters, conduct of elections, and penalties for non-compliance.
6. Meetings of the Undergraduate Assembly shall be:
 - a. Chaired ordinarily by the Speaker,
 - b. Held least twice a month during the fall and spring semesters, and otherwise at such times as its membership or the President shall deem appropriate,
 - c. Not held without twenty-four (24) hours public notice,
 - d. Called by the President, by the Executive Board, the Steering Committee, or by a petition signed by either twenty-five (25) percent of the total number of UA members in office or twenty-five (25) undergraduates,
 - d. Open for their entire duration to all undergraduates without exception, save that provided for by this Constitution,
 - e. Conducted in accordance with such procedures as the Bylaws shall provide,
 - f. Quorate by the presence of a majority of all members,
 - g. Each inclusive of a certain time, provided for in the Bylaws, for undergraduates to bring their concerns to the UA’s attention.
7. The UA shall have the exclusive power to provide for such things not provided for in this Constitution in a set of Bylaws, the composition and amendment of which shall require in all cases the consent of two-thirds of the total number of UA members present. All “joint regulation” as defined in this Constitution shall be encoded on the UA’s part in the Bylaws.
8. The UA may impeach and remove any UA member for misconduct or incompetence upon presentment of a petition of impeachment signed by any one-third of UA members or 5% of the whole undergraduate population. Such impeachments shall be tried by the full UA in a meeting conducted by the chairperson of the NEC (or designate) with full rights of due process conferred on the respondent(s), the trial conducted according to such procedures as the Bylaws shall provide and permissibly inclusive of a deliberations

period in which only NEC chairperson (or designate) and unimpeached members of the UA may remain, and the assent of two-thirds of the total number of UA members in office shall be necessary to remove any member from the UA.

9. The UA may also remove, without recourse to the process above, any member for objective failure to fulfill their duties as defined by the Bylaws. Such duties shall include but may not be limited to regular meeting attendance.
10. Vacancies on the UA shall be filled by the appointment of the next highest vote-getter from the immediately previous election in the constituency where the vacancy exists. If the entire list of candidates from that constituency is exhausted, and it shall be more than six weeks before the next General election, the NEC shall conduct a special election from that constituency to fill the vacant seat.
11. The UA may establish such committees as they or the Executive Board deems necessary and proper for the conduct of UA business. The Executive Board shall be empowered to appoint the members and chairpersons of UA committees.
12. There shall be a UA Steering Committee which shall consist of:
 - a. The UA President and UA Vice-President
 - b. The chief executive officer or designate of such other undergraduate organizations which the Steering Committee may invite to join the Committee.
13. The Steering Committee shall enhance the UA's representative capacity by giving voice to the diversity of the undergraduate community in the following ways:
 - a. It shall be empowered to refer any item of business to the UA, or make recommendations to it on the conduct of its business, which the UA must act upon it within ten academic days of submission;
 - b. All UA members shall be observing non-voting members of the Steering Committee in order to gain greater insight into the varying views of the undergraduate community;
 - c. The Vice-President shall be the chair of the Steering Committee and shall strive to represent the different voices of its members in all deliberations in which they take part;
 - d. The Steering Committee shall have the ability to regulate its membership and procedure according to rules of its own choosing. It should attempt, if possible, to resolve all questions of controversy by consensus before resorting to voting.

Article III – The UA Executive Board

14. There shall be an Executive Board of the UA (hereafter “the Executive”), consisting of:
 - a. A President,
 - b. A Vice-President,
 - c. A Speaker,
 - d. A Treasurer,
 - e. A Secretary, and,

- f. Such other officers as the Bylaws may provide.
15. These shall be the powers of the President:
- a. To chair the Executive and exercise general supervision over the UA's activities,
 - b. To represent all undergraduates to the administration, and the campus and wider community,
 - c. To be a member of the UA with all the powers and privileges thereof,
 - d. To set the agenda of the UA and the Executive, subject in the former case to the review of the UA,
 - e. To execute the policy of the UA as expressed by its resolutions,
 - f. To hold a seat on the University Council Steering Committee, the University Council plenary, and the Trustee Committees on Presidential Consultation and Searches, subject to the rules of those organizations,
 - g. To interpret the UA Constitution, Bylaws and other UA regulatory documents, subject to the review of the UA,
 - h. To exercise all such functions and powers as the University shall have previously delegated to the Chairperson of the Undergraduate Assembly, and,
 - i. To exercise such other powers as the Bylaws may provide.
16. These shall be the powers of the Vice-President:
- a. To ordinarily chair the UA Steering Committee and represent the views of its members,
 - b. To assist the President in the exercise of the President's duties,
 - c. To serve as a full member of the UA with all the powers and privileges thereof,
 - d. To serve on the University Council Steering Committee, and,
 - e. To exercise such other powers as the Bylaws may provide.
17. No person shall simultaneously hold more than one position on the Executive; nor shall any President be elected to that office more than once; nor shall a President during their continuation in office hold any elective office in any organization herein established; nor shall a freshman be elected President.
18. The President and Vice-President shall be elected from the undergraduate population during the General Election, in accordance with these procedures:
- a. The NEC and the UA shall provide by joint regulation for the qualification of Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates, which may include petition and experience requirements;
 - b. An undergraduate may run for one of the two directly elected officers and a UA member simultaneously; if they are elected to one of President or Vice-President they shall be struck from the list of candidates in their constituency for UA member and the winners of UA seats in that constituency shall be determined as if the President and/or Vice-President had not run for a UA member position in that election;
 - c. No person may run for President or Vice-President and a directly elected Class Board position in the same General Election;

- d. The President and the Vice-President shall be elected simultaneously but independently of the other;
 - e. The Bylaws shall provide for one or more public debates between the candidates for President and one or more public debates between the candidates for Vice-President. All debates shall be open to the whole undergraduate population;
 - f. The President and Vice-President shall take office at the beginning of the Transition Meeting and serve until the beginning of the next Transition Meeting;
 - g. The NEC shall with the advice of the UA establish all other procedures for the elections of the President and Vice-President.
19. The Speaker, the Treasurer, and such other officers as the Bylaws may provide shall be elected at a Transition Meeting of the UA held following the election of the President and Vice-President at a time prior to reading days established by the outgoing Executive. The Transition Meeting shall be conducted according to such rules as the Bylaws shall provide, save as follows:
- a. The members, following depositions of the candidates, may elect to enter a “deliberations” period where only the UA members not running for office may remain, so as to discuss the various candidates;
 - b. All officers elected by the Transition Meeting shall be elected by an absolute majority of the total number of members then in office.
20. The UA may impeach and remove any officer, including the President and/or Vice-President, for misconduct or incompetence by presentment of charges preferred by any one-third of UA members or five percent of the total undergraduate population. The petition shall clearly state whether the petitioners desire the removal of the officer from their position or from both their position and the UA. Such impeachments shall be tried by the full UA in a meeting conducted by the chairperson of the NEC (or designate) with full rights of due process conferred on the respondent(s), the trial conducted according to such procedures as the Bylaws shall provide and permissibly inclusive of a deliberations period in which only NEC chairperson (or designate) and unimpeached members of the UA may remain, and the assent of two-thirds of the total number of UA members in office shall be necessary to remove any officer from their position.
21. In the case of the resignation, removal, or incapacitation of the President, the Vice-President shall become President and the UA shall within two weeks elect an undergraduate to the position of Vice-President to serve out the remainder of the Vice-President’s term, under the procedure used to elect the Speaker. In the case of the vacancy of the Vice-President, the UA shall elect an undergraduate to the position as above. If both positions shall simultaneously be vacant, the Speaker shall serve as President pro tempore until such time as the UA may meet to elect both a President and Vice-President under the procedure used to elect the Speaker.

Article IV - The Student Activities Council (SAC)

22. The Student Activities Council shall recognize undergraduate activities and fund their programs by means, and under rules of its own choosing, subject only to the provisions of

this Constitution. The Treasurer shall be a member of SAC's principal Executive body with full voting rights.

Article V - The Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC)

23. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall:
 - a. appoint such undergraduate representatives on the University Council and on such Council, School, Trustee, Presidential, Provost, ad-hoc, and all other committees as provided for by joint regulations approved by the NEC and the UA not inconsistent with this Constitution; but the UA may revoke such appointed persons, in extraordinary circumstances, by a two-thirds vote;
 - b. administer all elections and referenda herein provided under rules of their own choosing established with the advice of the UA;
 - c. educate the undergraduate population about the structure and functions of student government.
24. No undergraduate who holds any position:
 - a. appointed by the NEC, or,
 - b. elected in an election administered by the NEC,shall be a member of the NEC; save one UA member appointed by the Executive who shall serve as a full NEC member.
25. The NEC shall govern itself according to rules of its own choosing not inconsistent with this Constitution and shall be funded by the UA.

Article VI – The Student Committee on Undergraduate Education (SCUE)

26. The Student Committee on Undergraduate Education works to enhance undergraduate education and the intellectual atmosphere at Penn. Its efforts are predicated on the tenet that undergraduates must have a say in the academic programs of which they are most integrally a part.
27. SCUE receives its funding through the UA and works directly with the UA to address academic-related issues. It shall govern itself according to rules of its own choosing not inconsistent with this Constitution.

Article VII – The Social Planning and Events Committee (SPEC)

28. The Social Planning and Events Committee shall provide social programming and special events for the entire undergraduate community.
29. SPEC receives funding from the UA and works closely with the UA to improve the quality of life for undergraduates. Any undergraduate may become a member of SPEC.

Article VIII – The Class Boards

30. The Class Board for each undergraduate class shall provide social programming to instill a sense of class and school spirit, unity and pride, and break through social barriers.
31. Each Board shall consist of a popularly elected President and such other positions, selected by such means, as the Boards shall provide in rules jointly established by all of the incumbent Boards. The NEC shall regulate the elections of Class Boards in the same manner as for the UA.
32. Class Board elections shall be held simultaneously with UA New Student elections in the case of the Freshman Class Board and the General Election in the case of the upperclassmen Class Boards.

Article IX – Finances

33. The Undergraduate Assembly is responsible for funding itself and all other organizations herein established through money allocated to it by the University, and shall do so only in consequence of appropriations made by the UA in accordance with this Constitution.
34. There shall be a Budget and Finance Committee, which shall be comprised of the Treasurer and a number of UA members established in the Bylaws elected to the committee by the UA as the Bylaws shall provide. The Committee shall oversee the funds of the UA, prepare the annual budget, review all Contingency Requests, and shall periodically audit the records of the UA and all of its constituent parts.
35. SAC shall operate from the funds remaining after the groups directly funded through the UA have been allocated their budgets as provided in this Constitution.
36. The UA provides funding in two ways: through the Annual Budget and through Contingency Requests.
37. The Annual Budget shall be approved for the year following the academic year it which it is considered, and shall provide for the funding of all the ordinary operations and activities of all branches of student government, including the UA, and shall be prepared and approved in accordance with the following:
 - a. The Budget and Finance Committee shall propose a draft budget to the UA and the undergraduate community in accordance with a schedule that the Bylaws shall provide. This schedule shall include provisions for extensive interviews with the leadership of each organ as well as time for public comment and review.
 - b. The UA shall then consider the draft Budget at a meeting held in the Spring semester prior to Spring Break, making such amendments as it sees proper, and then may approve the budget in accordance with its rules of procedure.
 - c. Should the UA not approve the Budget, they shall return it to the Committee, with a statement outlining their objections, and the Committee shall review the draft budget accordingly and resubmit it to the UA at its next meeting.

38. Budget Requests are approved by the UA from time to time from the UA Contingency Fund, and shall be available to all undergraduate groups including the organs of the UA. The Budget and Finance Committee shall be responsible for reviewing all requests and recommending appropriate courses of action by the UA in accordance with such guidelines and procedures as the Bylaws shall provide.

Article X - Referenda

39. The referendum is the highest decision making instrument of student government and may be used to overturn any decision of the UA or any other organization herein established.

40. Decisions made by a valid referendum void any conflicting decisions of any organ of the Undergraduate Assembly or other organization herein established and may be overturned only by subsequent referendum. No action of a referendum shall be construed to limit the function of any officer, committee or work group except as explicitly stated.

41. Referenda shall be administered and validated by the NEC:

- a. No referendum shall be validated without voter participation levels of at least 15% of the undergraduates currently enrolled, based on figures obtained from the registrar.
- b. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall determine other regulations and procedures for referenda with the advice of the UA.

42. Referenda may be called by a two-thirds vote of the UA or by the presentation of a petition with signatures from 5% of the total number of undergraduates enrolled.

Article XI - Amendments

43. This Constitution shall be amended or superseded only by an absolute majority of those undergraduates voting in a referendum in which at least twenty percent (20%) of the current undergraduates enrolled shall participate.

44. Such a referendum shall be administered and called as detailed in this Constitution.