

Constitution of the Columbia University African Students Association

Article I - Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the African Students Association hereafter referred to as the ASA.

Section 2. The officers of the ASA shall make up the Executive Board of the ASA hereafter referred to as the E-Board.

Article II – Purpose

Section 1. The purpose of this organization shall be to provide a forum for discussion and education of the political, social, and cultural landscape of Africa and more generally to create a culturally enlightened community on Columbia and Barnard campuses by educating people about Africa *and its diaspora through active community engagement*

Section 2. The E-Board shall plan and coordinate events that will achieve the aforementioned goals.

Article III – Membership

Section 1. The general body, hereafter referred to as the g-body, of the organization must be comprised of at least two-thirds CC, SEAS, Barnard and GS students. Membership to the ASA is open to any affiliate of Columbia University, i.e., undergraduate, graduate students, faculty, alumna, etc.

Section 2. An active member with voting rights is one who attends at least 4 ASA g-body meetings per semester

Section 3. The privileges of active membership are voting rights and the primary responsibilities of membership are to attend meetings and participate in events.

Section 4. Membership may be revoked by the E-Board if deemed necessary or appropriate.

Article IV - Meetings and Procedures

Section 1. G-body meetings of the ASA will be held every week. The ASA E-Board will determine the date and time of each meeting.

Section 2. All procedural and urgent issues shall require a simple majority vote of the ASA E-Board. Procedural issues are those which use ASA resources (e.g. money, manpower, etc.). Urgent issues are issues which require an immediate stance on a situation, topic or viewpoint using the ASA name and support.

Section 3. In cases of non-urgent issues that require a stance by the ASA, members must be informed (at a g-body meeting, at a town hall meeting, etc.) and a $\frac{2}{3}$ motion of the members present must be met before a decision is rendered. If the $\frac{2}{3}$ vote is not met, the ASA will take a neutral stance on the issue

Section 4. All official voting will be anonymous and there will be no voting in absentia

Section 5. There will be a transitional meeting at the end of each current E-board member's tenure in which each E-board member must give a report and brief incoming E-board members on their duties as part of the ASA E-board.

Section 6. Each outgoing E-board member is responsible for compiling a detailed list of duties, responsibilities, recommendations and/or advice concerning their position which will all be compiled into a single transitional file or document for the incoming and future boards.

Section 7. An ASA quorum consists of 20 active members of the general body, including E-board members; a motion shall only be subjected to a vote when the quorum has been met.

Section 8. Voting rights of members shall be verified prior to any g-body voting, be it a referendum, or general election. As such, attendance will be taken by a member of the executive board and a comprehensive list of all eligible voting members will be posted prior to each election.

Article V – Officers

Section 1. The ASA shall be managed and directed by the following officers (in order of succession):

1. President
2. Vice President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Social Chair
6. Political Chair
7. Marketing Chair
8. Campus Liaison
9. Publicity Chair
10. Webmaster
11. Historian

12. Freshman Representatives(s)

Section 2. The list of officers are broken up into the following tiers = Top Tier (President & Vice President), Second Tier (Secretary & Treasurer), Third Tier (Social Chair, Political Chair, Campus Liaison, Publicity Chair, Webmaster, Historian), Fourth Tier (Freshmen reps)

Article VI - Duties and Responsibilities

Section 1. The duties of these officers shall be the effective and efficient management of all meetings, events, and other functions.

Section 2. The president shall be responsible for setting each meeting's agenda, however, a majority vote by the E-Board can set an item on the agenda, as well.

Section 3. These officers will be elected in the spring semester, not less than 2 weeks and not more than 6 weeks to the end of the semester for a one year term, which will terminate after elections the following spring. The termination includes removal from the E-board listserv and responsibility of the outgoing board member to forward all correspondences relevant to their office to the incoming board member.

Section 4. An E-board member cannot hold the same position in the board for more than two consecutive terms.

Section 5. Each official shall have explicit knowledge of the ASA constitution and settle or arbitrate questions and issues in accordance to constitutional procedures

Section 6. Functionally as an Officer --- (This Primarily Concerns but Not Limited to Major Absences)

i.) E-board needs to be formally notified that an individual (officer) is not going to be there (be functional, etc). The notification must be a written notice signed by individual or an email written/sent by individual and must be given before you leave. The legitimacy/validity of the amount of time being taken off by the individual will be deemed to be either reasonable or unreasonable at the discretion of the E-board.

ii.) If you do not notify the E-board in the manner expressed above, you can be removed.

iii.) In the event that you have notified the E-board but they deem your absence/its duration as unreasonable, thereby infringing on your ability to be a functional officer, the E-board will take a vote on whether that person should be removed. A $\frac{2}{3}$ majority outcome with quorum present is necessary to rule the removal of said individual

Section 7. Position details:

The President shall:

- a. serve as the primary spokesperson and contact person for the ASA.
- b. bear primary responsibility for the execution of all ASA directives.
- c. determine the agenda for weekly g-body and E-board meetings, subject to review by the entire E-Board.
- d. chair the meetings of the ASA.
- e. maintain relationships with Columbia and Barnard administrators significant to the experience of the ASA g-body.
- f. vote only in the event of a tie.
- g. keep the E-Board apprised of all current business
- h. must have served previously on the board for at least a year

The Vice President shall:

- a. assist the President in the fulfillment of his or her duties.
- b. assume the role of President in the event of the resignation, impeachment, removal or ineligibility of the President.
- c. oversee the organization and execution of g-body voting; including but not limited to ensuring a quorum and counting votes.
- d. advise the Freshman Representatives on the E-Board.
- e. be responsible for overseeing the ASA committees and collecting biweekly reports from each

committee head.

f. handle E-Board disciplinary issues in consultation with the President.

The Secretary shall:

- a. document the activities of the ASA E-board by taking minutes at weekly E-board meetings.
- b. compile and update regularly a calendar of events being planned by the ASA, to be posted on the website and notify E-board members
- c. keep the ASA general body updated on all relevant issues.

The Treasurer shall:

- a. administer and monitor the budget of the ASA.
- b. advise the E-Board on all matters regarding the spending of ASA funds.
- c. apply for spending approval from the requisite ABC, SGA and GBB officials in a timely fashion.
- d. maintain and make accessible detailed records of revenues, expenditures and encumbrances of the ASA.
- e. submit a detailed statement to the E-Board at the first meeting of every month on the state of ASA's funds.
- f. proactively search for and apply for school grants to boost spending power.
- g. *maintain good relations and communicate effectively with the ABC/SDA/GBB/SGA office concerning budgetary and funding issues.*

The Social Chair shall:

- a. serve as the head of the social committee
- b. spearhead the planning of social events on behalf of the ASA as well as with other groups on campus.
- c. serve on the Afropolitan committee mainly as a liaison between the Afropolitan committee and the E-board.
- d. arrange for refreshments at ASA meetings and events, pending approval from the board.

e. Shall organize at least two social events per semester

The Political Chair shall:

- a. serve as the head of the political committee.
- b. spearhead the planning of events that educate the campus on various political issues concerning the continent
- c. be up to date on the on-campus and off-campus political events relating to the continent.
- d. keep the E-Board and g-body apprised of political issues it needs to act on.
- e. represent the club on political issues about the continent when the ASA is required and/or expected to comment; in consultation with the E-board

f. plan and organize at least one Political Roundtable Discussion each semester with the assistance of the political committee.

Marketing Chair shall:

- a. find effective ways of monetizing ASA's media platforms including, but not limited to, the website, mobile app and Blog.
- b. Apply for grants and pursue sponsorship deals in collaboration with the Treasurer.
- c. assist the Publicity Chair in maintaining active Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Blog accounts for the ASA, working to publicize all upcoming events, including weekly meetings, discussions, and major events.
- d. design paraphernalia and materials for the effective marketing of ASA's events
- e. work with the webmaster in making sure that there is adequate marketing material for events.
- f. serve as head on the marketing committee which will be made up of the Webmaster, Publicity Chair, Historian and 5-6 other general body members

The Campus Liaison shall:

- a. represent the ASA at any other inter-group meetings
- b. communicate with other groups by providing statements on the ASA's position regarding issues, events or ideas
- c. request other groups' co-sponsorship, attendance, support, etc. at ASA events
- d. be the ASA representative to the BSGC, IAS, Black Constituency Meetings and all other campus groups.

e. Shall be the head of the Outreach Committee

- f. report back to the E-Board any relevant information passed at the above meetings.
- g. work in conjunction with the social chair/committee on campus wide events

The Publicity Chair shall:

- a. maintain active Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Blog accounts for the ASA, working to publicize all upcoming events, including weekly meetings, discussions, and major events
- b. coordinate with on and off campus media outlets on coverage of ASA events.
- c. work with the webmaster in making sure that there is adequate marketing material for events.
- d. in charge of making sure that adequate flyering is executed to optimally market events when necessary.
- e. work in conjunction with the Communications Team, which includes the Secretary, Historian and Webmaster*

The Freshman Representative(s) shall:

- a. be responsible for soliciting freshmen to join the club.
- b. provide monthly updates on freshmen membership to the E-Board
- c. liaise with the Social Chair to plan events that attract freshmen to the club.
- d. be well-informed about the issues facing ASA freshmen and convey these regularly to the E-board
- e. coordinate all aspects of FMI, the Freshman Mentorship Initiative which includes but is not limited to getting freshmen interested, pairing mentors with mentees, and organizing monthly FMI meetings.

The Webmaster shall:

- a. manage and consistently update the ASA website
- b. work with the rest of the E-board in maintaining and updating all online ASA activities.
- c. work in conjunction with the Communications Team, which includes the Secretary, Publicity Chair and Historian*

The Historian shall:

- a. be responsible for keeping records (could be brief summary paragraphs) of topics , main ideas and/or main consensuses discussed and reached at g-body meetings and events
- b. take pictures and records of all ASA events and provide updated media (photos, videos, soundbytes, etc.) to the webmaster within a week of the g-body meetings and events
- c. be responsible for creating a yearbook detailing the highlights of the year in conjunction with the communications committee. The process of creating the yearbook must begin latest by the beginning of the spring semester
- d. Shall handle alumni relations*
- e. take attendance at general body meetings and notify the President if an Officer misses more than 3 g-body meetings/events per semester*
- f. work in conjunction with the Communications Team, which includes the Secretary, Publicity Chair and Webmaster*

Article VII - Electing, Appointing, and Removing Officers

Section 1. Elections will be held annually AT LEAST 2 weeks prior to the termination of the spring semester. Exception is for the Freshman Representative(s) position election, which will be

held after a month into the fall semester. Candidates running for multiple positions may drop down to only positions they were originally nominated for.

Section 2. Any voting member wishing to run for office must be nominated for the position and a member of the ASA general body must second that nomination. The eligible candidate may be nominated for up to 3 positions. For each position the candidate runs for, the general body will vote by secret ballot and the candidate that wins by a simple majority will assume office. The candidate must drop out of all other contests once they become elected for a position.

Section 3. Each elected official must sign a binding contract to fulfill his or her respective duties for the academic year

Section 4: An E-Board member may be removed from their position for the following reasons:

- a. The E-board member consistently neglects his or her responsibilities.
- b. The E-board member is no longer a member of Columbia/Barnard (includes but not limited to being expelled, taking a leave of absence, etc.)
- c. The E-Board member engages in behavior unbecoming of an ASA official.

Section 5: If any of the above conditions have been sufficiently met, the E-board has the prerogative to terminate the individual's position on the board through a secret ballot and a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote of all members of the E-board. The E-board member must be given the opportunity to plead their case before voting by the rest of the board if he or she so chooses.

Section 6: In the event of a mid-term vacancy of an elected officer or an unfilled position, the E-Board shall make the vacancy known to the g-body at a general body meeting and request nominations in order to fill the position. The process of election shall be exactly similar to that of a regular E-board election in the spring.

(a). The top two Tiers CANNOT be subject to a G-Body Election

(b). When the E-board uses discretion to replace a vacancy in Tier Two then they will choose from Tier Three.

This Clause Only Applies To Only the Top Tier Officers (President & Vice President)
Filling the President Position -

i.) *The VP automatically assumes the role of President unless there is a reason put forth by an individual on the E-board deeming said individual to be unfit. This reason must be seconded by another E-board individual and then, after pleading their case to the Board, the E-board will vote on whether they agree that the individual is unfit to assume the role of President. This vote requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority outcome to be permissible.*

ii.) *If the individual is found to be unfit by the $\frac{2}{3}$ outcome mentioned above, then the E-board will choose another befitting individual on the E-board by way of nominating 2 people. These two nominees will run for the position of President in the same fashion as with a regular election (this includes the presenting of a 1 minute speech followed by a short Q&A session). The only difference is only E-board members will vote on will become President between the two nominees. A majority outcome must be achieved to decide on the winner.*

iii.) *In the event that no one on the E-board wants the role of Presidency, then the E-board will collectively decide on two individuals from the G-body who they think will be best for the job and then present them with the opportunity to run. If those two people agree then they will run and the G-body will vote on who will become President. A majority vote is what is necessary to proclaim a winner.*

Filling the Vice President Position -

i.) *If there is an objection made from the beginning part of this clause ("The VP automatically assumes the role of President...), then the E-board will employ the same process of nominating two individuals from the board in order to ascend the position of Vice President. The same process applies to choosing a VP as did a President.*

(c). Only Tier Three vacancies will then be subject to the G-body.

Article VIII – Committees

Section 1. At present, the standing committees of this organization are:

1. The Communications *Team*: The duties of this team shall be to work in conjunction with the webmaster on updating the website with newsletters, the publicity chair in his/her publicity duties, and the historian with the yearbook. *This will be a Team consisting of the Historian, Secretary, Publicity Chair, and Webmaster.*

2. The Political Committee: This committee will be chaired by the Political chair. The duties of this committee shall be to organize politically themed events including but not limited to one political roundtable each semester and to keep the E-board well informed of any political issues on the continent.

3. The Social Committee: This committee will be chaired by the Social Chair. The duties of this committee shall be to organize social events with an emphasis on promoting the culture of Africa's various peoples.

4. The Outreach Committee: *This committee will be chaired by the Campus Liaison.* The duties of this committee shall be to organize volunteer events for the ASA and will be chaired by the Volunteer Coordinator and be led by a committee chairperson nominated by any member of the E-board

5. The ASA's Afropolitan Committee: The Afropolitan Committee is *a semi-autonomous committee under ASA.* The duties of this committee shall be to organize and prepare for the annual Afropolitan Show. The membership of this committee is not limited to ASA members.

6. The Marketing Committee: Will be chaired by the Marketing Chair and include the Webmaster, Publicity Chair, Historian, and 5-6 other general body members. They will publicize all ASA events.

Section 2. *All committees will be capped at 5 members including the head*

Article IX – By-Laws

Section 1. By-Laws of the organization shall be established and altered by a majority vote of the ASA g-body.

Section 2. By-Laws of the Board shall be established and altered by a majority vote of the E-Board.

Section 3. *Code of Conduct*

(a) When formally representing ASA at an event or meeting, do not do anything unbefitting of your ability to discharge your duties.

(b) Be mindful that you are representing ASA as a whole. Do not speak for everyone and generalize the organization's views if the ASA has not taken an official stance on it.

(c) No personal attacks on fellow ASA G-body or E-board meetings. Be respectful.

(d) The ASA will not cater to any particular religious denomination. The ASA does not and will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, or ethnic ordain.

Committee By-Laws

Section 1. All committees shall:

- a. be created and dissolved by the E-board
- b. be open to all members of the ASA student body.
- c. develop and execute all pertinent projects under the leadership of the committee chairperson.

Section 2. The committee chairperson is responsible for submitting a report on the actions of the committee to the E-board when appropriate, at least once a month.

Section 3. With the exception of the social and political committees, a member of each committee will be selected and removed as Committee Chairperson with the approval of the E-board

Section 4. *With the exception of the social, political, and outreach committees, a member of each committee will be selected and removed as Committee Chairperson with the approval of the E-board*

Articles X - Amendments to the Constitution

Any voting member may propose an amendment to the E-Board; however, a majority vote by the E-Board must be achieved for the proposal to be put on the g-body agenda. Amendments to the Constitution require quorum and a 2/3 majority of the voting membership.

- (i) *G-body must be given 5-7 days' notice about changes and amendments being made to Constitution in order for them to review it prior to voting on it. Specifically, G-body must be provided with a written word-for-word document of the amendment(s) that has been proposed by the E-board to be added to the Constitution. There shall be a referendum that then takes place to accept the Constitution*
- (ii) *When new proposed or accepted Amendment is voted on, the new version is only taken into effect the next E-board Tenure and does not affect current officers.*

Article XI - Ratification

This constitution shall be established by an affirmative 2/3 vote of an ASA quorum

Article XII - Abbreviated Terms in the Constitution

- a. BSGC – Black Student Group Consortium
- b. E-board – Executive Board
- c. G-body – General Body
- d. IAS – Institute of African Studies

- e. OMA – Office of Multicultural Affairs

- f. SGA – Student Government Association

- g. GBB- Governing Board at Barnard

- h. ABC –Activities Board at Columbia