

ECE Society Constitution

Authors

This document was originally written by a collective of students to be further referred to as the Founders. Amendments shall be tracked in a separate document which shall include editing persons or group, change summary, date and any additional notes.

Preamble

This document contains the Constitution of the University of Waterloo's Electrical and Computer Engineering Society. The membership is to be solely comprised of Undergraduate Electrical and Computer Engineering students at the University of Waterloo. This document shall form binding terms of reference and shall supersede all previous operating policies and/or any previous constitutions.

This constitution will be ratified only in the case of a referendum to create the University of Waterloo Electrical and Computer Engineering Society passes with majority of cast votes being in favour. Any amendments can be made a motion at a general meeting that meets quorum.

Article 1: Definition of the Society

Section 1.1: Name

The full-form name of the society shall be “The University of Waterloo Electrical and Computer Engineering Society”; the society may also be referred to more briefly as both “UW ECE Society”, or “ECE Society”.

Section 1.2: Interpretation and Definitions

The following terms are defined for use in this document as well as in general operation of the ECE Society:

1. “UW” or “the University” shall hereafter refer to “The University of Waterloo”
2. “ECE” shall hereafter refer to “Electrical and Computer Engineering”
3. “Constitution” shall hereafter refer to this document, a.k.a. “The ECE Society Constitution”
4. “IEEE” shall hereafter refer to the “IEEE Foundation”
5. “Policy manual” shall hereafter refer to “The Electrical and Computer Engineering Society Policy Manual.”
6. “Executive” shall hereafter refer to “The Electrical and Computer Engineering Society Executive Members”
7. “Department” shall hereafter refer to the ECE Department at the University of Waterloo
8. “On-term” shall hereafter refer to ECE Students enrolled in an academic term at the time of reference
9. “Off-term” shall hereafter refer to ECE Students on a non-academic term at the time of reference
10. “Critical Motion” shall hereafter refer is a decision that directly leads to an amendment of the constitution or affects the student body as a whole

Section 1.3: Mission Statement and Society Values

Section 1.3.1: Mission Statement

The mission of the ECE Society is as follows: To promote a sense of community and unity among members of the Electrical and Computer Engineering community.

Section 1.3.2: Society Values

The Society shall be founded on the following values, also referred to as pillars:

1. Social – Facilitate an environment where ECE students can take initiative on realizing their ideas.
2. Academic – Provide academic tools and supports for ECE students.
3. Professional – Assist in building industry and networking connections for ECE Students.
4. Technical – Provide for opportunities for students to develop their technical skills through relevant workshops and seminars.

Section 1.4: Membership

All undergraduate students enrolled in the ECE undergraduate program at UW are considered members of the society. ECE Graduate, Alumni and faculty members are considered affiliate members, hence lacking the right to vote or benefit financially from the ECE Society.

Section 1.5: Policy Manual

The policy manual shall serve as a document that further extends the rules and regulations of the ECE Society. The policy manual can only be ratified by quorum of the executive, with a majority of approval. The policy manual must align with the views stated in the constitution, in case of contradiction between the constitution and the policy manual, the constitution shall take precedence.

Article 2: Organization of the Society

Section 2.1: Executives

Section 2.1.1: Collective Role of the Executive

The ECE Society is governed by a group referred to as the Executive. The Executive is selected on a term-by-term basis by means of a secret ballot vote open to all members.

The executives must ensure:

1. The ECE Society is functioning in a way that members seem fit,
2. The ECE Society operates in an ethical and proper manner,
3. The views of the ECE Department are taken into consideration when operating,
4. Make themselves readily available to be approached by the students and make an effort to attend events,
5. The promotion and continuation of the society, and
6. Make sure candidates to replace them are brought forward for elections.

Section 2.1.2: Executive Structure

The Executive is comprised of 5 elected ECE students. Individual titles and responsibilities as specified below:

1. President shall:
 - a. Oversee and support the operations of the ECE Society and other Executive,
 - b. Serve as the primary contact to the ECE Department,
 - c. Oversee the financial component of the ECE Society,
 - d. Be responsible for the creation and amendments of the official ECE Society literature,
 - e. Organize and plan ECE Society general and executive meetings,
 - f. Appoint a secretary and speaker for said meetings.
2. Vice-President Academic shall:
 - a. Oversee the creation and organization of academic events on behalf of the ECE Society.
 - b. Represent the ECE Society on matters directly relating to the academic affairs of all members.
 - c. Serve as the contact for ECE Society members taking initiative to plan academic related events open to all ECE Society members.
3. Vice-President Social shall:
 - a. Oversee the creation and organization of social events on behalf of the ECE Society.
 - b. Serve as the contact for ECE Society members taking initiative to plan social related events open to all ECE Society members.
4. Vice-President Marketing / Outreach shall:
 - a. Serve as the designer for any ECE Society publications,
 - b. Oversee the social media accounts and ensure media presence is frequent, and

- c. Promote all events to the relevant parties.
- 5. Vice-President Professional shall:
 - a. Oversee the creation of professional events and networking opportunities,
 - b. Interface with IEEE and the IEEE Student branch, and
 - c. Oversee the ECE Society involvement in relevant conferences, and
 - d. Interact with external ECE and IEEE Societies.

Section 2.1.3: Executive Term Length

The executive term shall be eight (8) months long starting the first (1st) day of the month following the end of the previous executive term. Hence, the executive term shall end the last day of the eighth (8th) month.

An executive team will be off-term executive for their first four (4) months at which time it is expected that they plan for their on-term period and, as requested, support the current on-term executive team. The second half of their executive term shall be four (4) months of being the on-term executive team at which time they will assume all the roles and responsibilities as specified in the above section.

On-term and off-term executive are expected to work with the newly elected executive to transfer knowledge and onboard them into their roles before the end of their eight (8) month executive term.

Section 2.2: Meetings and Quorum

Section 2.2.3: Executive Meetings

Executive meetings shall occur not less than four times a term. These meetings shall be to align the efforts of the executive, provide general updates on their activities and ensure the society is sufficiently active. At least two of the executive meetings must include quorum of both the on-term and off-term executive teams.

Section 2.2.3: General Meetings

General meetings shall occur not less than once (1) a term and should not occur in excessive quantity.

The purpose of these meetings should be to:

1. Ratify a budget and spending plan,
2. Ratify any changes to the constitution, policy manual or other societal documents,
3. Bring forward general ECE society motions including executive mandates,
4. Provide updates from the Executive to the ECE student body,
5. Obtain feedback and discuss plans for future initiatives, or
6. Attend to any additional matters of the ECE Society.

General meetings should be planned such that the maximum number of people can attend and be thoroughly advertised not less than ten (10) days before occurring. An agenda and any relevant documents should be made available not less than three (3) days before the meeting.

Section 2.2.3: Executive Quorum

For a decision to be approved by the Executive, at least three-fifths (3/5) of the on-term members must be in agreement. Unless that decision has a non-trivial effect on the off-term executive and students then a three-fifths (3/5) approval from both executive teams must be reached. In the case of an unfilled executive role these ratios are to be adjusted to the nearest ratio that is still above one-half (1/2).

Section 2.2.4: General Meeting Quorum

Quorum must be met to pass a Critical Motion where it must receive approval from at least 3 students of each on-term year and not less than sixty percent (60%) of the attending students. Hence, the minimum quorum is defined for Spring term as twelve ECE students (12) and for other terms it is defined as fifteen (15) ECE students. All other general motions may be voted on without quorum as long as a reasonable representation of ECE students are present.

Section 2.3 Elections

Section 2.3.1: Elections Officer

To maintain partialness an Elections Officer who meets the below criteria must be chosen. The Elections Officer is to be selected no later than 30 days before the last day of classes. Any ECE Society member wishing to serve as the Elections officer must meet the following criteria:

1. Member of the ECE Student body with no intention of running in the election they wish to moderate,
2. Not a current on-term or off-term executive, and
3. Approval by quorum of the executive excluding an executive running for re-election.

The elections officer has the following responsibilities:

1. Ensure elections are being run according to election guidelines,
2. Attend all election events to ensure candidates are following election rules, and
3. Count or confirm the final results of the election.

Section 2.3.2: Election Eligibility

Any hopeful candidate looking to run in an ECE Society election must meet the following criteria:

1. Enrolled in 1B or higher for the term of elections,
2. Maintain a satisfactory academic standing or higher with no failed courses, and
3. Present a nomination form with at least 10 signatures from ECE Society members, with at least two not being in their class.

In addition, any candidate meeting the following criteria cannot run:

1. Already having served 2 consecutive terms in the position they seek re-election for,
2. Already having served 3 consecutive terms in any Executive position,
3. Currently acting as the Elections Officer, or
4. Are expected to graduate or be otherwise not on-term and on-campus for the expected term.

Section 2.3.3: Conduct of Elections

Voting is to be done online and regulated entirely by the Elections Officer. A ranked choice voting system is to be used, in which voters can choose the candidates in order of preference. A "No Candidate" option is also to be available, in the case where the voter feels none of the candidates would be a good selection for the position.

A winner is declared when a candidate receives 50% of the vote, and in the case that no candidate receives 50%, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is removed and the votes recounted, until 50% is reached.

In the case where a role is not filled in the general election, a special election for that particular role (or roles) is to be organized, by the Elections Officer.

Section 2.3.4: Campaign Regulations

Candidates can campaign through both online and offline means. The sitting Elections Officer is responsible to select a reasonable campaign spending limit which is to be from the candidates own expense. Candidates are allowed to visit classrooms, at a time co-ordinated between the department and the Elections Officer, to minimize classroom disruptions. If an allowance is made regarding anything by the Elections Officer, it must be made to all candidates equally and be publicly acknowledged.

Executive of either on-term or off-term teams are not allowed to comment, campaign or support any candidates other than their own re-election bids.

Section 2.3.5: Campaign Period Length

The campaign period is a total of two weeks to be scheduled as follows:

1. One-week nomination period for candidates to submit their intention to run for approval by the Elections Officer. (Mon-Fri)
2. One-weekend for the Elections officer to organize election and confirm candidates meet the requirements and approve campaign material. (Fri-Sun)
3. One-week for candidates to start their campaigns. (Mon-Fri)
4. Four-day voting period (Sat-Wednesday)
5. One-day buffer to count and determine election results (Thurs)
6. Election results are revealed to candidates at 8:00 am and officially released by noon (12:00 pm) (Fri).

Modifications to the timing and specific clarification is at the discretion of the Elections Officer and should be recorded for public viewing as soon as decided.

Section 2.3.6: Removal of candidates

At the discretion of the Elections Officer a candidate may be removed if they:

1. Use unethical, offensive or disrespectful campaign tactics of any kind,
2. Break the explicit campaigning rules, or
3. Unjustly gain an advantage over the other candidates.

A candidate may also withdraw themselves from the election at any point before the final winner is publicly announced.

Section 2.4: Removal of Executive members

A member of the Executive can be removed from their position for any of the following reasons:

1. Resignation at their own discretion,
2. Resignation at the request of the membership, justified with reason as well as a petition with at least five percent (5%) of the total membership or fifty (50) members in accord,
3. Failure to meet their responsibilities, according to a petition signed by no less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the remaining on-term and off-term Executives, or
4. Unjustified absence from executive or general meetings totalling:
 - a. two (2) consecutive, or

b. three (3) total meetings.

In the case of removal of an Executive member, an Interim Executive can be selected by quorum of the Executive. If the sitting President is removed from their post, only a member of the existing executive can be selected as the Interim President. Any Executive member removed from their post is no longer considered a viable candidate in a future election unless deemed special circumstances by quorum of the sitting Executive at the time of election.