

ISA CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

1. NAME, OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

1.1 Name:

The Indian Students Association (ISA) is a registered graduate student organization at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMass). In this document it will be hereafter referred to by its acronym 'ISA'.

1.2 Mission and Objectives:

ISA is a non-political, non-profit, secular organization committed to fostering diversity at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Its main objectives are to provide a support system for Indian international students as well as to provide a free and open forum of cultural and ideological exchange to UMass students who are interested in India.

1.3 Functions:

The Functions of ISA are chosen to realize the objectives specified in section 1.2, and include:

- Proposal and implementation of events consistent with ISA objectives (section 1.2) including but not restricted to cultural activities.
- Assisting new international students with the process of acclimatizing to life at the University of Massachusetts
- Maintenance of membership lists and electronic list services for the purposes of informing students as to the ISA's activities and also to help in fostering communication within the Indian community.

The Executive Structure (see section 3) is responsible for implementing these tasks and has the freedom to choose appropriate methods for the same.

2. MEMBERSHIP REGULATIONS AND ORGANIZATION

2.1 Membership

Membership to ISA is open to all individuals, irrespective of their race, sex, religion, or nationality actively enrolled at University of Massachusetts, Amherst. ISA reserves the right to deny/revoke membership at any time as described in section 6. The list of members shall be updated periodically. There are no membership dues and the list of

members is kept solely for the purpose of informing the members of activities and needs of ISA. The members are informed of ISA activities, meetings, and elections through the ISA electronic list services as described in section 1.3.

2.2 Financial Management

For projects and activities of ISA, the Executive Committee (see section 3) of the ISA can approve funds with the understanding that:

- (a) The funds are used to meet organizational costs of activities consistent with the objectives of ISA as outlined in Section 1.2.
- (b) Any surplus funds raised by the ISA will go towards an ISA community fund whose disbursement will be determined by the Executive Committee of ISA (see section 3) with inputs and suggestions from the General ISA membership.
- (c) The Executive Committee (section 3) may also designate a part of this community fund for emergency activities. Again as stated in the point above any such disbursement of funds will be done in a manner consistent with ISA policy and objectives.
- (d) The General Body can recommend to the Executive Committee to suspend fund disbursement for activities, including the dissolution of the Executive committee itself, in the extreme cases of non-compliance of the Executive Committee members with the above provisions and other provisions of these by-laws.

3. EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE

The executive structure consists of the Executive Committee of the ISA (Section 3.1). This committee is responsible for carrying out all the tasks and for meeting the objectives of the organization.

3.1 Officers of ISA: Executive Committee

Officers serving on the executive committee of the ISA shall be elected by its members (see Section 4.5). Each officer of the executive committee shall serve for a one-year term and shall not receive any emoluments from ISA. The Executive Committee is endowed with the responsibility of meeting the requirements of the General ISA membership and is accountable to the same.

The executive committee shall consist of at least 7 officers including the president, vice-president, treasurer, event coordinators, graduate student senate liaison and webmaster. Additional officers can also be elected to the Executive Committee if the voting members

of the ISA decide at the General Body Meeting (GBM) (see Section 4.1) to create additional posts. The elections will take place at the ISA GBM (see Section 4.1). The responsibilities of each post are outlined below:

President

The president should have a strong commitment to the objectives of ISA. His/Her main task would be to ensure that the ISA Executive Committee functions efficiently, executes its tasks promptly, and is able to meet all its objectives. He/She should preside over the GBMs of the ISA in the normal course of events.

Vice-President

The Vice-President should actively help and support the President in organizing various activities of the ISA. In the absence of the President, or when the President is indisposed, the Vice-President should assume the powers and execute the tasks of the President.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining ISA funds and accounts in conformity with the requirements of the Executive Committee and the Graduate Student Senate. He/she would also present the financial status of the ISA at each GBM and present an annual report at the first GBM of every new calendar year before the general elections (see section 4.3).

Event coordinators

The event coordinators are responsible for coordinating and organizing specific events/activities approved by the Executive Committee and the General Body.

GSS Liaison

The GSS liaison represents the ISA at the Graduate Student Senate. He/She would attend Senate meetings, would be the liaison between the Senate and the ISA Executive Committee.

Webmaster

The webmaster is responsible for maintaining the membership list , and moderating and updating the electronic list serves and the ISA website <http://www.umass.edu/isa/>

4. MEETINGS, DECISION MAKING, VOTING AND ELECTIONS

4.1 Meetings:

ISA shall have two types of meetings:

- (1) Executive Committee Meeting and
- (2) General Body Meeting.

The functional details of these meetings are described below:

Executive Committee Meeting: The primary function of these meetings shall be to set plans for annual events and to implement decisions passed in the GBM. The detailed structure of the executive committee is given in section 3.1. The executive committee has the authority to allot contingency funds for emergency activity support.

General Body Meeting (GBM): This meeting is open to all members of ISA. The President of the ISA (see section 3.1) is responsible for setting the agenda of each meeting and informing all members in advance. An assigned ISA member shall be responsible for keeping the minutes of the meeting. Any issues not directly related to the set agenda can be raised for discussion by any member with approval from the President of the ISA. The GBM would be presided over by the president of the ISA. Further at least one-third of the Executive Committee members should be present in the GBM, for quorum requirements to be met. The meeting shall fail to be a GBM if the quorum requirements are not met. A GBM shall be held at least once every six months. Some of the important functions of the GBM are as follows: (i) to update to members on the ISA activities, both planned and undertaken (ii) to discuss the budget (iii) to discuss new ideas for ISA events, (iv) to hear and respond to concerns expressed by the members, (v) to hold elections once a year and select members of the executive committee by a simple majority vote, and (vi) to resolve special issues. These special motions shall require a 2/3rds majority vote (see section 4.5) to be approved.

Quorum for making decisions in the GBM: Until such a time that the ISA sets its first quorum requirements, the quorum for the ISA shall be defined as attendance of 40 at least one third of the ISA membership.

Voting in the meeting: All ISA members can vote on a motion in the GBM.

The minutes of the GBM and Executive Committee meeting should be available to any ISA member on request. If the Executive Committee receives a petition by an ISA

member(s) to revoke a decision they should suspend the decision. The Executive Committee will then work with the general body to come up with a solution suitable to it and the petitioner(s).

4.2 Voting:

Any ISA member who is currently active student at UMass is a member of ISA and has a right to vote.

Motions in the GBM meetings as described in section 4.1 shall be subjected to open (or voice) vote, provided the motion is related to the topic under discussion (according to the set agenda). The chairperson has the right to allocate the time duration for discussion before the motion is subjected to vote.

Resolutions can be passed by the following types of votes:

Majority Vote: A majority vote for any motion shall consist of approval by more than 50% of the members present and voting.

Absolute Majority Vote: An absolute majority vote consists of approval by at least two-thirds of all members of ISA present and voting.

4.3 Elections for the Executive Committee of the ISA

General elections for posts on the ISA executive committee shall be held on a suitable date in the 1-month period before the expiration of the 1-year term of the current executive committee of the ISA. The elections shall be conducted by the current president of the ISA or an electoral committee. In case of the resignation of the president before the elections, the committee and general ISA community will appoint an electoral committee. Any member of ISA can be nominated for any seat on the executive committee.

All members must be informed of the date and time of elections at least one month in advance. This would give prospective candidates sufficient time to be nominated. Candidates will be given 10 minutes before the election to state their views. The person securing the highest number of votes in his or her favor for any post shall be declared elected to that post. Responsibilities would be transferred to the newly elected committee after the elections, provided that the fairness of election conduct is undisputed. In the event of a dispute the general body's ratification is required before the new committee

takes office. The general body could in the event of serious doubt, order a re-election.

If an office-bearer resigns from his/her post or is removed from the post by a vote of no confidence against the person, then the vacant position shall be filled by an election in the next GBM. This election shall be held by a majority vote for that position only and the elected candidate shall complete the remaining term of the previous office-bearer.

4.4 ISA By-Laws

If necessary, every new ISA Executive Committee can make By-Laws appropriate for the running of the ISA. The By-Laws will need to be approved by the community in a GBM before they can come into effect. Any amendments to the By-Laws need to be similarly approved.

5. AMENDMENT

5.1 Amendments to these By-Laws can be proposed by any ISA member. Notices must be sent 10 days in advance to all voting ISA members informing them of the date, time and location of the GBM or ISA Special Meeting that they must attend to vote. A copy of the exact wording of the proposed amendment(s) should also be sent to all members in advance of final approval.

5.2 Amendment to the By-Laws will require an absolute majority of members present and voting at the GBM. A notice stating the exact wording of the amendment, and specifying the time and location of the GBM should be sent 10 days in advance to all voting members.

6. IMPEACHMENT

Any ISA member and any member of the Executive Committee can be impeached provided:

(a) An advance notice is given to all ISA members stating the agenda, time and location of the GBM held to impeach him/her, and (b) the impeachment is passed by an absolute majority of members present and voting at the GBM.

7. ISA'S NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

7.1 ISA welcomes participation from all UMass students in working towards its mission, and does not discriminate on the basis of religion, gender, age, disability, race, color,

national origin, marital status or sexual orientation.

7.2 ISA does not provide any support to organizations for religious purposes, and seeks to work with organizations committed to non-sectarian, non-violent and humanitarian principles.