

**We, the members of The Debate Society, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution.**

## **PART I**

### **COMPOSITION**

1. The Debate Society shall be a student club at VIT University (Vellore Campus) which will be in charge of all debate related activities as defined by the VIT University Administration.
2. The Debate Society shall comprise only of members who are currently students at VIT University (Vellore Campus) regardless of each one's degree program or year of study.
  - I. At the commencement of this constitution, every member of the 'PD Pool' for the academic year 2011-2012 shall be a member of The Debate Society.
  - II. All inductions from the academic year 2012-2013 onwards shall solely be on the basis of procedures outlined in Article 4.

## **PART II**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

3. Members in the Debate Society will either be debaters or organisers where
  - I. 'Debater' refers to every member of The Debate Society selected purely on the basis of debating potential as recognized by the Parliamentary Debate Committee.
  - II. 'Organiser' refers to every member of The Debate Society who possesses reasonable debating potential as recognized by the Parliamentary Debate Committee and exceptional organizational capabilities as recognized by the Internal Events Committee.
    - a. All organisers will form the Organising Committee (OrCom) which will function under the Internal Events Committee.
    - b. The OrCom will be answerable to the Internal Events Committee only for the assistance it provides in organising internal events.
    - c. Each organiser will remain a part of the OrCom only for the semester in which he or she is inducted into the club and the semester following it. After the completion of this period he or she will no longer be an organiser and will become a debater (as per Article 3(I)).

4. Membership to The Debate Society will only be granted to eligible individuals (see Article 2) through the Common Selection Process (CSP)
  - I. The Common Selection Process must be open to the entire university.
  - II. The Common Selection Process must be conducted at least once in an academic year and not more than once a semester.
  - III. The procedure for the selection of debaters will be decided upon by the Parliamentary Debate Committee.
  - IV. The procedure for the selection of organisers will be decided upon by both the Parliamentary Debate Committee and the Internal Events Committee. (See Article 7(V)c)
  - V. Assessment of debating potential will only be on the basis of aptitude in the Parliamentary Debate format; as such a criterion is most comprehensive in identifying good debating skills. No other criteria shall be adopted.
  - VI. All selected members, including organisers, will be entitled to receive training in the Parliamentary Debate format for a minimum period of one semester, unless refused by the trainee. (Article 7(V))
  - VII. No more than one organizer may be selected for every five debaters selected through each CSP.
  - VIII. The results of the Common Selection Process cannot be based upon religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, mother tongue, degree program, year of study or school/department affiliations.
5. Members admitted to The Debate Society will remain members until the end of their degree program
  - I. Members may choose to leave the club at any point of time by submitting a resignation to the President.
  - II. A petition for the removal of a member from the club can be tabled by any member and would require a majority vote in each Sub-Committee of the Core Committee (Article 7(II)) and a separate two thirds majority vote by the remainder of the club in the presence of the President who will not vote.
  - III. In case of organisers, they may also be removed through a majority vote passed by the Internal Events Committee alone. (Article 3(II)b)
  - IV. An appeal against either decision can be made to the President who may then choose to call for a re-vote within 24 hours only once, but cannot veto.
  - V. Re-admission to the club in any situation will only be granted through the Common Selection Process (Article 4)

## **PART III**

### **STRUCTURE**

6. The President shall be the head of The Debate Society
  - I. The President will be in charge of the working of the Core Committee for the benefit of The Debate Society as a club, and for ensuring that the performance of the Core Committee is in compliance with the needs of the Non-Core members as far as possible (Article 7(XII))
    - a. The President must appoint a Vice President to each Sub-Committee from amongst its members, in consultation with the outgoing Core Committee and the ex-President.
    - b. The President reserves the right to reject training policy changes, event proposals or any other decision passed by either of the Sub-Committees while clearly stating reasons for the same, and may overrule any decision made by either of the Vice-Presidents or the Public Relations Officer.
    - c. The President reserves the right to replace an impeached member of the Core Committee with other members who are eligible (as per Article 7(I)) for the duration of his term.
    - d. The President reserves the right to transfer Vice-Presidency between members of a particular Sub-Committee (as per Article 7(IX)c).
    - e. The President may veto against the impeachment of a member of the Core Committee.
    - f. The President shall make decisions regarding delegation of ambassadors and representatives.
    - g. The President shall also keep record of all current members and all office bearers, including dates of induction and appointment of all members and office bearers respectively.
    - h. The President shall be independent of any Sub-Committee affiliations at the time of holding office (Article 7(II))
  - II. The Presidential Election shall be conducted in the presence of the current President (except in the case of a re-election following an impeachment, see Article 6(III)).
    - a. The election shall be decided by a majority vote through the method of secret ballot.
    - b. Pre-poll campaigning will only be permitted for a duration of 24 hours immediately preceding the polling date. Candidates found to be in violation of this may be disqualified by the President.
    - c. Every current member of The Debate Society who has retained membership for a minimum period of one full semester is eligible to vote.
    - d. The Core Committee may withdraw voting privileges for members who have been a part of the club not longer than two full semesters and who the Core

Committee feel have not been actively involved with club functioning, through a unanimous consent of all members and by assuming it unless any member besides the member whose rights are being withdrawn opposes such a move.

- e. A minimum of two thirds the number of eligible voters must be present and voting including half the strength of each Sub-Committee of the Core Committee.
- f. The presidential candidates shall nominate themselves.
- g. A presidential candidate must have been a member of The Debate Society for at least three full semesters.
- h. A presidential candidate may only be a student who is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of any degree program during the time that he or she intends to hold office.
- i. A presidential candidate may or may not belong to the current Core Committee.
- j. The election process shall be regulated by the current President who will not vote, or by a non-voting Core Committee member in case of a re-election (Article 6(III)).
- k. The President shall only hold office for the duration of that academic year, reaching a maximum tenure thus of one year.

- III. Any member of The Debate Society may call for the impeachment of the current President at any time.
  - a. The President will be given 24 hours to prepare and present his defense.
  - b. The impeachment vote can only pass by a 75% majority of the entire strength of The Debate Society excluding the President.
  - c. Re-election procedure would be carried out as per Article 6(II).

7. The Debate Society shall consist of a Core Committee which will be in charge of administration.

- I. A member who has been a part of The Debate Society for the period of at least one full semester and who has not completed three years of study at VIT University is eligible to be a Core Committee member.
- II. The Core Committee shall consist of two sub-committees - the Internal Events Committee (IC) and the Parliamentary Debate Committee (PC) - and an independent Public Relations Officer (PRO)
- III. In this article, unless stated otherwise
  - a. '*Non-Core Member*' refers to every member who is eligible to be a member of the Core Committee but is not a member of the Core Committee.
  - b. '*Internal Events*' refers to all events within the purview of The Debate Society that are not related to Parliamentary Debating.
  - c. '*Non-Core(IC)*' refers to all members who are not part of IC Sub-Committee.
  - d. '*Non-Core(PC)*' refers to all members who are not part of PC Sub-Committee.

- IV. The Internal Events Committee shall be in charge of Organising internal events on campus.
  - a. Organising internal events would include all work related to the event-before, during and after the event.
  - b. Organising internal events would not include volunteer work, such as sticking up notices and classroom announcements and hence such work may be delegated to Non-Core members. However, accountability in any case would still lie with the IC.
  - c. Only organisers (members of the OrCom) may be obligated to perform volunteer work.
  - d. Every member of the Internal Events Committee and the OrCom can still be fully involved with all Parliamentary Debate activities, including training and selection procedures, to the same extent as any other Non-Core member.
  - e. Participation at external events that are not related to Parliamentary Debating shall also be under the administration of the IC
  - f. The Internal Events Committee must be involved in the selection of organisers through the CSP (Article 7(V)c)
- V. The Parliamentary Debate Committee shall be in charge of all activities related to Parliamentary Debating
  - a. The Parliamentary Debate Committee must conduct the Common Selection Process (CSP) (as per Article 4).
  - b. For the selection of debaters, the Parliamentary Debate Committee may choose to involve any Non-Core(PC) member in addition to itself.
  - c. For the selection of organisers, the Parliamentary Debate Committee must ensure representation of at least one member of the IC for every two members of the PC, whose consent in the decision would be required.
  - d. The Parliamentary Debate Committee must provide training to all selected members in the Parliamentary Debating format for the minimum duration of one semester from the time of induction unless any selected member chooses to not receive such training.
  - e. Non-Core(PC) members may be designated training responsibilities; however accountability will still lie with the PC.
  - f. Organising Parliamentary Debate events would not include volunteer work, such as sticking up notices and classroom announcements and hence such work may be delegated to Non-Core members. However, accountability in any case would still lie with the PC.
  - g. OrCom members may be obligated to perform volunteer work with the consent of the IC.
  - h. Every member of the Internal Events Committee can still be fully involved with all internal events and external events that are not related to Parliamentary Debating, to the same extent as any other Non-Core member.

- VI. The Public Relations Officer shall be in charge of Public Relations
  - a. The PRO may seek assistance from other Core Committee members by requesting permission for the same from the concerned Vice-President.
  - b. The PRO may seek assistance from Non-Core members but such assistance would not be mandatory upon the one asked.
  - c. The PRO cannot be a member of any Sub-Committee.
- VII. Membership can only be granted to one sub-committee at any given time
- VIII. The Core Committee posts shall be allotted to eligible candidates (Article 7(I)) by the outgoing core committee and the outgoing President in consultation with the President elect
  - a. No member of the outgoing Core Committee standing for a second term will be involved in the selection procedure during the discussion of candidature of members contesting for a second term.
  - b. Members appointed for a second term in the Core Committee may not exceed one fourth of the total strength of either of the Sub-Committees.
  - c. The number of members allotted to the Internal Events Committee shall not exceed one fourth the number of members that are eligible to be a part of the Core Committee, and shall not be less than one eighth of the same.
  - d. The number of members allotted the Parliamentary Debate Committee shall not exceed one fourth the number of members that are eligible to be a part of the Core Committee, and shall not be less than one eighth of the same.
  - e. A Public Relations Officer must be appointed.
  - f. Failure to establish either Sub-Committee of a minimum size, due to unwillingness on the part of the members, will lead to the merging of the Sub-Committees. All related powers would be shared accordingly.
- IX. Core Committee members can only hold office for the duration of that academic year, resulting in a maximum single tenure of one year, and a maximum of 2 tenures of any size.
- X. Each Sub Committee shall be headed by a Vice-President who will be answerable to the President
  - a. The Vice-President shall preside over the working of his or her Sub Committee and will be a member of that Sub-Committee.
  - b. The Vice-President reserves the right to reject any decision passed by his or her Sub Committee while providing reasons for the same.
  - c. The Vice-President may be stripped of his or her Vice-Presidency by the President, but would then continue to be a member of his or her Sub-Committee. The President must also then appoint a new Vice-President from the existing Sub Committee.
- XI. A motion to impeach any member of the Core Committee, including the Vice-President, can be raised by any member of The Debate Society

- a. The vote would take place in the presence of the President who will not vote, and would require a two thirds majority of all club members to pass.
  - b. The member facing impeachment will be granted 24 hours to defend himself of his charges.
  - c. In case the President calls for the impeachment of a Core Committee member the same procedure will be applied as mentioned in Article 7(X).
- XII. Both Sub-Committees will be assigned work and responsibilities as per the orders of the President
  - a. The President may choose to assign temporary posts and portfolios that may only be valid up until the end of his term or before it.
  - b. The President will also be expected to be a mediator in case of a dispute between the Sub-Committees
  - c. The President may increase the membership of the core committee up to the limits prescribed in Article 7(VIII).

## **PART IV**

### **AMENDMENTS**

- 8. Amendments to the Constitution with respect to any clause can be tabled at any point of time
  - I. Amendments can only be tabled by members of the Core Committee or the President.
  - II. Amendments would require a two thirds majority of The Debate Society to pass.
  - III. Amendments regarding clauses dealing with matters of impeachment and length and number of tenures (Articles 6(II)j, 6(III), 7(IX), 7(XI)) can only come into effect after the current Core Committee has vacated office.