

Constitution of Refuge at The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

Article I. Name and Nature

Section 1: Name

The official name of the organization, appearing on all documentation, shall be “Refuge”; hereafter referred to as “Refuge.”

Section 2: Nature

The purpose of Refuge is to provide an online community through which New Americans may connect and communicate with college-aged students in America. This platform will promote conversational English, assist in the acclimation process, and foster intercultural exchange and dialogue. In addition to a forum where community members may share resources and experiences, Refuge matches each refugee with an American student through an online-based program spanning the academic year that culminates in a summit at The Ohio State University where partners will meet face-to-face for the first time. Participants will work together in sessions to identify challenges for refugee populations and create opportunities to overcome these obstacles. These conversations will establish long-lasting relationships, foster intercultural understanding, and spur further community involvement.

Nondiscrimination Clause

Refuge and its members will not discriminate against any individual(s) for reasons of age, color, disability, gender identity, or expression, national origin, race, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The only criteria for membership in Refuge are passion for our mission and capacity to contribute to our mission.

Refuge is open to any Ohio State student willing to abide by the constitution.

At all times, members of Refuge will maintain respect and proper etiquettes of interaction and communication, even in the event of conflict, disagreement, or organizational duress.

Apolitical Nature

Refuge shall at no time make specific endorsements of national, state, local or university candidates. Refuge shall provide an open platform for debate and dialogue on such political topics, serving as a means of education and information without showing bias for or against any individual, party, or institution.

Slogan/Theme

Refuge at OSU shall adopt a theme for each end of year reception, or has the option of keeping a previous theme at the discretion of the board.

Article II. Mission and Purpose

Section 1: Mission Statement

To foster acclimation and empowerment of young adult New Americans through connection with their peers, exposure to higher education, and community involvement. Furthermore, to encourage cultural competency through intercultural dialogue and exchange for all participants.

Section 2: Vision Statement

To empower New American populations to become contributing members of their societies on a local, national, and global scale.

Article III. Levels of Membership

Section 1: Executive Board

Executive board descriptions are detailed in Article IV.

Section 2: Recruits

Recruit members are any Ohio State student that have been admitted to Refuge through a selection process, and are currently undergoing training. After the conclusion of orientation and training, barring any violation of membership requirements, recruits will be promoted to Corps Members. If a recruit does not meet the criteria necessary to be granted membership, they may not receive entry into the organization.

Section 3: Corps (General Members)

The corps consists of all members who have completed training and are currently participating in a partnership through Refuge and working in the mentoring program with refugee students. Corps members are required to submit reports through journaling their interactions with their mentee, as outlined by the Mentor DRC.

Section 4: Committees

The following chairs of the executive board: Finance, Marketing, and Events (as outlined in Article IV) will be responsible for overseeing a committee of corps members. Each chair shall determine the number of members in his or her committee. The committee members are responsible for assisting the chair in the fulfillment of his or her responsibilities.

Article IV. Executive Board

Section 1: Composition

Board member elections are application- and interview-based and voted on by the incoming president and graduating board members. Refuge's executive board shall be comprised of the following positions:

- a. President
- b. VP of Operations Chair
- c. Finance Chair
- e. Mentee DRC (Mentor Development and Recruitment Chair)
- d. Mentor DRC (Mentee Development and Recruitment Chair)
- f. Events Chair
- g. Media and Marketing Chair

Section 2: Officer Duties

President

- The President shall be one of the aforementioned executives and determined through an application/interview process with exiting board members
- The President shall lead the vision of the organization.
- The President shall serve as the official spokesperson of the organization in all meetings, interviews, and interactions with other organizations, individuals, and institutions, both within The Ohio State University and externally.
- The President shall oversee the performance of all executive board members to ensure that constitutional requirements and duties are fulfilled.
- The President has the authority to be a co-signer on all checks and financial transactions.
- The President shall act as a liaison between the OSU chapter and the Refuge USA nonprofit and shall submit monthly reports to the nonprofit board.
- During the process of transitioning from the incumbent executive board to the executive board elect, the President shall work with both groups to ensure that a proper understanding of Refuge constitution is conveyed, that all executive board members have complete and working knowledge of their respective positions, and that there is no gap in working toward general organizational goals and objectives.
- With a two-thirds majority vote of the executive board, the President shall determine the proper course of action with regard to issues upon which the constitution of Refuge does not elaborate.
- In the case of a vote, if there is a tie, the President acts as the tiebreaker, wherein his or her opinions overrides.

VP of Operations Chair

- The VP of Operations Chair serves as overall operational mastermind of the organization, making sure that everyone else can do their jobs effectively without worrying about details.

- In conjunction with the President, the VP of Operation Chair shall be responsible for assisting with meeting agendas and materials prior to each executive board meeting and mentor meeting
- The VP of Operations Chair shall take official notices for all Refuge executive board, mentor, and committee (when necessary) meetings, ensuring their quality and accuracy.
- The VP of Operations Chair shall be responsible for all room bookings and reservations, completion of necessary forms and paperwork, and maintaining communication with the offices and individuals necessary for achieving this task.
- The VP of Operations Chair shall maintain and organize the Google Drive to include any and all documentation of official business conducted by Refuge. This file shall be kept as an archive of Refuge activity and shall include items from all aspects and elements of the organization.
- The VP of Operations Chair shall handle maintain the organizational email account, sending emails to mentors, mentees (if necessary), and others with relation to the organization using MailChimp when necessary.
- The VP of Operations Chair shall also handle consolidation of metrics/feedback from both MDRCs as well as for applications/interviews.

Finance Chair

- The Finance Chair shall maintain all documentation and receipts of incoming and outgoing funds from Refuge accounts, maintain a ledger of transactions, auditing and balancing said ledger in reference to account statements issued by the financial institution with which funds are deposited, and reconcile all reimbursements that may occur in the conducting of Refuge business.
- The Finance Chair shall specifically maintain a record of Refuge's university account and ensure all transactions are properly accounted for and documented.
- The Finance Chair, along with the President, shall have the authority to be a co-signer on all checks and financial transactions.
- The Finance Chair shall work to guarantee sufficient funds are maintained so as to properly fund and facilitate the execution of Refuge's events; strategically planning the funding of events in order to minimize or recover costs so as to maintain Refuge funds.
- The Finance Chair shall maintain a working relationship with sponsors and donors by:
 - Utilizing sponsorships and donations for all Refuge events when possible.
 - Providing sponsors and donors with an invoice stating the exact amount and nature of the sponsorship or donation.
 - Communicating with the Operations Chair to maintain a the Sponsor-Donor Database in Mailchimp
 - Recording and documenting all sponsorships and donations made to Refuge.
 - Ensuring that sponsors and donors receive periodic activity updates, special invitations to major Refuge events from the Media and Marketing Chair.

- Ensuring sponsors and donors are recognized for their contributions to Refuge.
- Coordinating the purchase and presentation of awards to sponsors and donors at major events, or for major contributions to Refuge.
- The Finance Chair shall be responsible for collecting all pledged donations raised through fundraising events.
- The Finance Chair shall be responsible for providing the executive board with periodic account balance updates, specifically prior to events.
- The Finance Chair shall produce a Refuge budget projection before each semester or event to estimate expenses, as well as a pre and post event analysis to evaluate usage of funds, and an end of the semester comparative analysis of projected versus actual fund utilization.
- The Finance Chair shall work with the President to resolve emergency funding issues if and when they arise.
- Manage the money request form for other members to submit whenever they want to make a purchase on behalf of the organization
- The Finance Chair has the option to lead and manage a committee that will assist with duties and fundraising

Mentee Development and Recruitment Chair (Mentee DRC)

- The Mentee DRC is responsible for coordinating all mentee recruitment efforts, which includes (but is not limited to) all of the following:
 - Co Communicating with community partners to enhance recruitment efforts and maintain relationships
 - Creating and utilizing an application process with set expectations for mentees to apply (includes application and video interview)
 - Interviewing and selecting mentees that are fit for the program
 - On-boarding the mentees into the program with the expectations and curriculum
 - Work with the Mentor DRC to pair mentors nad mentees
- The Mentee DRC is responsible for communicating with mentees and their families with updates on news items, events, etc. via WhatsApp, email, phone or another accessible method
- The Mentee DRC will lead all mentee specific training for students before the beginning of each year
- The Mentee DRC must understand and periodically follow up with each mentee on their relationship with their mentor as well as record all relationship troubleshooting
- The Mentee DRC will spearhead creating and compiling feedback from mentees throughout the year
- Making sure that there is a fluid and transparent relationship with the Executive board and mentees and act as the head liaison between the mentees and Executive board.

Mentor Development and Recruitment Chair (Mentor DRC)

- The Mentee DRC is responsible for coordinating all mentee recruitment efforts, which includes (but is not limited to) all of the following
 - Communicating with community partners and contacts to enhance recruitment efforts and maintain relationships
 - Collaborating with the Media and Marketing Chair for mentor recruitment through involvement fair, emails, newsletters, and social media.
 - Has the option to lead and organize a Mentee Recruitment Committee to assist
 - Creating and utilizing an application process with set expectations for mentors to apply
 - Interviewing and selecting mentors that are fit for the program
 - On-boarding the mentors into the program with the expectations and curriculum
 - Work with the Mentee DRC to pair mentors and mentees
 - Creating an application for mentors to apply to with set questions and a rubric
- The Mentor DRC is responsible for communicating with mentors with updates, news items, events, and opportunities through accessible means (GroupMe, email, etc)
- The Mentor DRC will lead all mentor specific training for students before the beginning of each year
- The Mentor DRC must understand and periodically follow up with each mentor on their relationship with their mentees as well as record all relationship troubleshooting
- The Mentor DRC will spearhead creating and compiling feedback from mentors throughout the year
- The Mentor DRC will assist The President in creating the agenda and leading mentor meetings
- The Mentor DRC will make sure that mentors are up-to-date on calls and interactions with their mentees and keeping the mentors accountable w/their relationships
- Making sure that there is a fluid and transparent relationship with the Executive board and mentors and act as the head liaison between the mentors and Executive board.

Events Chair

- The Events Chair plans 3-5 events each year that engage our mentees and the Columbus community (includes a Kickoff and Immersion Experience)
- The Chair must work with a variety of organizations/departments on and off campus
- The Chair must communicate with Mentor and Mentee DRC for mentor and mentee involvement
- The Chair must work with Finance Chair to submit funding proposals for events
- The Chair must work with Media and Marketing Chair to market public events

- The Chair also leads and organizes the logistics committee to assist in the planning and development of events

Media and Marketing Chair

- The Media and Marketing Chair is responsible for all media and marketing that is published externally for Refuge. This includes all of the following:
 - Maintaining and posting regularly on Refuge’s social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat
 - Creating quarterly newsletters that are sent to all internal and external partners
 - Taking photos and videos for all events
 - Creating flyers, certificates, programs, posters, etc.
- The Media and Marketing Chair is also responsible for collaborating with the Mentor and Mentee DRCs for recruitment, Finance Chair for fundraising, and Events Chair with events.
- The marketing chair has the option to lead and organize a committee to assist with duties.

Advisor

- It is strongly recommended that Refuge have an advisor, ideally from an academic school, department or field of study, who is active, supportive, and an advocate of refugee concerns. It is understood that the role of an advisor is to mentor and assist from a hands-off approach. It is understood that the primary functioning, planning, and execution of the organization are the sole responsibility and domain of the students.
- The Advisor will act as a consultant to the organization in understanding the institutional hierarchies present within the University. The advisor has no voting right.
- The Advisor will ensure that the organization undergoes an official University administered audit of its finances on an annual basis.
- In collaboration with the President and the outgoing Executive Board, guarantee that a transition process to train the Executive Board-elect occurs in a timely manner.
- On a bimonthly basis, meet with the President to be briefed on the activities of the organization, and address any issues, concerns, or projects that may directly involve the organization’s advisor.
- In the event of a period of insufficient membership or organizational inactivity, it is the responsibility of the advisor to oversee the proper storage and safe keeping of all organizational assets, resources, and possessions until such time as sufficient membership and activity exist to transfer this responsibility back to the executive board and student members of the organization.
- The advisor should also express sincere enthusiasm and interest in the group and its activities as well as be a figure of support.

- The advisor should also assist the organization in maintaining, and if need be, establishing organizational procedures.
- The advisor should also be open to criticism from the organization and respect the students' right to disagree.
- The advisor should also assist the organization with internal and external conflict resolution.
- The advisor should also serve as a third party perspective in evaluating and critiquing the activities of the organization.
- The advisor should also encourage the group to keep records and documentation on file and in a permanent archive to ensure the longevity of the organization
- Articulate and interpret campus policies and procedures to the organization.
- Be supportive of the officers and the organization as a whole.
- Encourage the organization to periodically evaluate its progress in relation to its written goals.
- Oversee and ensure the adherence to constitutional policy in the event of the dissolution of Refuge.
- The organization's duties in relation to the adviser include the following:
 - In a timely manner, notify the advisor of all organization events and activities.
 - Be open to criticism from the advisor and respect the advisors' right to disagree.
 - Acknowledge the advisor's time and energy donated and express appreciation.

Section 3: Term

- All executive board members terms are for one (1) academic year (Summer Semester – Spring Semester).
- The term of the executive board shall begin in the Summer Semester.
- Any executive board position vacated for any reason shall be refilled by a nominee approved by a majority vote of the Executive Board. The nominee must meet all conditions for holding office. The term of his or her office shall expire with the rest of the Executive Committee.

Section 4: Executive Board Election Process and Requirements

- All executive board members, excluding Advisor, must be currently registered Ohio State University Students.
- All executive board members shall uphold leadership standards.
- All mentors may apply for all executive board position, and only current board members may apply for the position of president.
- Mentors currently not on the executive board must complete an application and interview and will be selected by the incoming president and graduating board members.

- An executive board member with the exception of the President wishing to continue in their position for another term beyond one must apply through the same process as a general mentor
- Executive board members wishing to pursue the position of president must go through an application and interview process with the current president (if they are not running) and any members exiting the board.

Section 5: Impeachment

- A motion to impeach with good reason must be proposed by at least one executive board member, and agreed upon by a two-thirds majority vote by the executive board.
- Good reason is defined as an executive board member not fulfilling their constitutional duties and/or not currently registered OSU students. A motion to impeach may be proposed if the following occurs:
 - Skips three or more meetings per semester without notice
 - Causes conflict, internal or external to the organization that may jeopardize the existence or functioning of Refuge.
 - Is not fulfilling their duties to where the organization is unable to function properly
- If impeached, that executive board member will be given the opportunity to defend themselves. However, if the board still feels that they are not fulfilling their duties or feels that the executive board member is causing conflict, a final vote with two-thirds majority will complete the removal process, and they must gracefully step down with no future argument.

Article V. Meetings

Section 1: Board

- Refuge shall hold weekly organizational planning meetings, otherwise known as executive board meetings, throughout the year,
- Voting:
 - Voting shall consist of a proposition by a board member, and will be confirmed through “yea” and “nay” votes by the rest of the board. For elections, voting will take place via paper voting in order to maintain confidentiality. All propositions may be voted on confidentially if a board member suggests a paper vote. A quorum of four board members is required before any voting takes place. In the event of a tie, the President’s opinion will prevail. Members may abstain from voting.

Section 2: Committee Meetings

- Committees (as led by each chair) will meet biweekly
- Meetings will focus on organizational and leadership development, outlining long term goals and providing feedback and updates on progress.

- Meeting discussion is up to the discretion of each chair.

Section 3: General Body Meetings

- The executive board, all committee members, and corps members will meet together twice per semester.
- Meeting dates will be determined by the executive board.
- These meetings will focus on the current state of the program and long-term planning, as well as receiving feedback from all members of the organization.
- Furthermore, these meetings will serve as a platform to discuss goals for the semester, whether previous goals were adequately met, and areas of strengths and potential improvement.

Article VI. Recruitment & Removal Process

Section 1: Recruitment

The recruitment process will take place each Fall semester, and also in Spring semester if deemed necessary. The recruitment process will include a period of recruiting and info sessions, completion of an application, interviews of those selected for further review, and a training period upon admittance. New members will be required to complete a rigorous training process. Components of this training process will include, but are not limited to: day-long retreat, a few sessions on professionalism, confidentiality, and legal matters, and mentor training, which will include a period of shadowing at Refuge sites. Upon completion of the Refuge training model, members will be deemed capable of mentoring refugee partners.

Section 2: Removal

Members who have blatantly wronged the organization through a heinous activity of theft, property damage, disregard for the rules set forth in this Constitution or by The Ohio State University, or some equivalent action, can be prohibited from participating in future events and may be expelled from the organization. The officers will review each individual case and offer a verdict, in writing, to the member. This verdict is final and immediate.

Article VII. Elections

All executive board member candidates must submit an application for candidacy to the current executive board in the allotted time.

Based on the applications, the executive board will suggest some applicants for an interview with the current board.

After the completion of all interviews, the executive board will vote on each candidate through a confidential paper vote.

In the event of a current executive board member re-applying for the board, he or she will be removed from the decision process for that position.

Article VIII. Ratification and Amendments

Section 1: Proposal

Amendments must be proposed by a member of the executive board.

Section 2: Support

The proposed amendment must have the support of at least one additional member of the executive board.

Section 3: Discussion and Voting

The executive board shall discuss the proposed amendment, during which modifications to said amendment will be possible.

Amendments shall be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the executive board. Voting may be confidential at the proposal of an executive board member.