

Friendship Circle Ohio State Constitution

Article 1 - Name, Purpose, and Non-Discrimination Policy of the Organization

Section 1: Name of Organization

The name of this organization shall be Friendship Circle at The Ohio State University (FCOSU).

Friendship Circle at Ohio State is an undergraduate student organization that is affiliated with Friendship Circle International and works closely with the Friendship Circle Columbus location. In addition, Friendship Circle at Ohio State is affiliated with Friendship Circle Columbus' partner organization, LifeTown. Friendship Circle provides assistance and support to children with developmental and intellectual disabilities by providing recreational, social, educational, and vocational programming. LifeTown offers children with developmental and intellectual disabilities the opportunity to develop beneficial life skills in a simulated natural community environment that includes aspects encountered within a town such as a doctor's office and bank. Friendship Circle at Ohio State will provide volunteers to Friendship Circle Columbus and LifeTown and support their missions through these affiliations.

Section 2: Purpose

The mission of Friendship Circle International is, "to bring happiness and companionship to children and young adults with special needs by celebrating their individuality, as well as bringing energy, support, and peace of mind to their families". In order to do this, Friendship Circle International focuses on, "developing the values of altruism, compassion, and acceptance" in their volunteers as they "heighten community awareness and sensitivity and encourage a sense of responsibility and involvement."

As a branch of Friendship Circle International, Friendship Circle Columbus reflects and puts into action the same mission and values, but they bring it to the people of the local Columbus community through their location in New Albany, OH.

LifeTown is a separate organization from, but is affiliated with, Friendship Circle. LifeTown is a national organization with a branch that operates at the same facility as Friendship Circle Columbus. The mission of LifeTown is to provide a safe space for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities to learn life skills in a positive, encouraging, semi-realistic "town" environment. The children will then be able to apply and transfer these new skills to their natural community.

Friendship Circle at Ohio State will encompass both Friendship Circle and LifeTown under one organization and strive to fulfill and uplift both of their missions through their direct affiliation with the Columbus branches. The purpose of this student-run organization is to provide Ohio State students with the opportunity to volunteer and contribute to enhancing the lives of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities by providing mentorship, friendship, and a positive environment through Friendship Circle and Lifetown Columbus. The affiliation of Friendship Circle at Ohio State with Friendship Circle Columbus and LifeTown Columbus provides students with the opportunity to diversify

their voluntary experiences at The Ohio State University. This organization is an opportunity for students passionate about enriching the lives of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities to gain valuable experience working towards this goal.

Friendship Circle at Ohio State exists to provide Friendship Circle Columbus and LifeTown Columbus with volunteers to support their programs, which includes:

- Morning programs
- After-school programs
- Book clubs
- Field trips
- Recreational group activities
- Home visits
- Buddy Club
- Culinary programs in low-income areas

Section 3: Non-Discrimination Policy

This organization does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, programs, admission, and employment.

As a student organization at The Ohio State University, Friendship Circle Ohio State expects its members to conduct themselves in a manner that maintains an environment free from sexual misconduct. All members are responsible for adhering to University Policy 1.15, which can be found here: <https://hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/policy115.pdf>.

If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleIX.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleIX@osu.edu.

Article II - Membership: Qualifications and categories of membership

Student membership shall be divided into two types, Active and Associate members. Non-student members, such as faculty, alumni, professionals, etc., may become members, but only as non-voting Associate members. Membership is open to any undergraduate Ohio State University student so long as they meet the criteria discussed below. There is an open membership policy with no application or interview required to become a member.

All Active and Associate members must be currently enrolled at The Ohio State University with a minimum academic achievement record defined as a cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.0.

Active membership includes Ohio State University students currently enrolled at least half-time who pay dues and attend Friendship Circle and/or LifeTown orientation and have completed a background check. In order to be considered an active member, a minimum of 5 volunteer events must be attended during the semester. If a member does not reach this minimum requirement but they have completed all other requirements to be an active member their membership status for that semester will still be changed to associate member. Active membership status is maintained for the entirety of the semester that status was acquired and each subsequent semester in which the member is apart of a voluntary program though Friendship Circle and LifeTown Columbus as long as they continue to pay dues each semester. If an Active member fails to pay dues by the established deadline, their membership will be terminated until they make the payment to Friendship Circle at Ohio State. Only active members may hold office, vote, preside, or officiate. Active members must attend all general body meetings and notify a member of the Executive Board through the designated process if they will not be able to be in attendance. Active members have a maximum of three unexcused absences before their membership status is officially changed to Associate. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, no-shows for members who have signed up to volunteer at programs, members who do not show up to meetings without contacting someone on the Executive Board. Excused absences may include, but are not limited to, class, exams, illness, family emergencies, or other extenuating circumstances that are up to the discretion of the Executive Board. Should there be a dispute over the decision of the Executive Board, the Advisor shall make the final decision.

Associate members are members who have paid dues, but have not attended orientation. If an Associate member fails to pay dues by the established deadline, their membership will be terminated until they make the payment to Friendship Circle at Ohio State. Associate members are unable to hold leadership positions, including any Executive Board or Chair positions. They are unable to vote in elections and volunteer with Friendship Circle or LifeTown.

The Executive Board is in charge of managing, registering, and keeping track of all members and their status. Any questions about membership should be directed to the Vice President who is designated as the membership contact.

Article III - Methods for Removing Members and Executive Officers

If a member engages in behavior that is detrimental to advancing the purpose of this organization, violates the organization's constitution or by-laws, or violates the Code of Student Conduct, university policy, or federal, state or local law, the member may be removed through a majority vote of the officers in consultation with the organization's advisor. The advisor shall reserve the right to expel any member on just grounds without the vote of the Executive Board. An expelled member shall not be entitled to a refund of any paid dues.

Any elected officer of the chapter may be removed from their position for cause. Cause for removal includes, but is not limited to: violation of the constitution or by-laws, failure to perform duties, or any behavior that is detrimental to advancing the purpose of this organization, including violations of the Student Code of Conduct, university policy, or federal, state, or local laws. The Executive Board may act for removal upon a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Executive Board in consultation with the

organization's advisor. The elected officer being removed will be notified of the intent of removal and will receive a written rationale for their removal. Further steps must be taken in removing said officer from the organization all together if deemed necessary.

In the event that the reason for member removal is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or cannot otherwise be shared with members (e.g., while an investigation is pending), {00312468-1} the Executive Board, in consultation with the organization's advisor, may vote to temporarily suspend a member or Executive Officer.

Article IV - Organization Leadership

Section 1: Executive Board

The Executive Board is composed of elected leaders who represent Friendship Circle Ohio State and its general body.

The President is the primary contact and student liaison between Friendship Circle Columbus and Friendship Circle Ohio State. This includes biweekly meetings with the Friendship Circle Ohio State Advisor and the Director of Friendship Circle Columbus. The President will also hold biweekly meetings with the entire Executive Board and the Chair positions. The President can decide to conduct one-on-one meetings with members of the Executive Board and Chair positions at their discretion. The President is the primary contact with Ohio State University administrative members to maintain active status as a student organization. The President is in charge of supervising all Executive Board and Chair positions along with the general body. The President will supervise all Friendship Circle OSU social media accounts to ensure they are sharing appropriate and relevant content. They can request any content to be removed at any time at their discretion. They shall plan all general body meetings, reserve the rooms in which these meetings will take place, and be the primary speaker at these meetings. They shall be in attendance at every general body meeting except in the case of an emergency. They shall also create a syllabus outlining the club schedule, goals, and volunteering opportunities. The President shall oversee Executive Board elections, conduct interviews for Chair positions with the Vice President, and appoint Chair positions. Presidents must attend formal training through Ohio State annually.

The Vice President shall assist the President with any duties. These duties may include, but are not limited to, counseling and providing perspective, recruiting new members, planning general body as well as Executive Board and Chairs meetings, and executing the syllabus. The Vice President shall be in charge of recruiting new members. Additionally, they shall be the designated membership contact. The Vice President shall fill in for the President if they are not able to fulfill their duties. In the event that a Secretary is not elected, the Vice President shall fulfill the duties of the Secretary.

The Treasurer shall maintain a budget approved by the Executive Board and keep track of the student organization's financial assets. They shall maintain a good relationship with the bank. The Treasurer will work closely with the Secretary in order to track whether or not each member has paid dues. They are responsible for the student organization's financial accounts. They will also work closely with the

Fundraising Chair in keeping track of the money raised for Friendship Circle International. The Treasurer must complete annual training through Ohio State.

The Secretary shall take attendance at every general body meeting and volunteering events. They shall keep an updated roster of each active and associate member including their attendance and membership status. They are responsible for recording minutes of each general body meeting. The secretary will send weekly emails and monthly newsletters to the general body members. They shall be in charge of maintaining and updating the organization's LinkTree with information and resources. They shall also create any QR codes or forms needed for any other aspect of the organization. They are responsible for maintaining organization of the Slack channels for the volunteering programs and communicating information to the appropriate program volunteers.

The Events Coordinator shall directly oversee the Marketing Chair and Fundraising Chair. They shall reserve rooms for different volunteering events and any other events delegated. The Events Coordinator is responsible for organizing and administering new volunteer orientations. The Events Coordinator shall brainstorm different ideas for future volunteer opportunities. They will create sign-up sheets for all volunteering opportunities with the Secretary's assistance.

Section 2: Chair Positions

The Marketing Chair is in charge of promoting the student organization by running the FCOSU social media pages and website under the direct supervision of the Events Coordinator. They shall design the monthly newsletter with the assistance of the Secretary. The Marketing Chair is in charge of creating any merchandise associated with the organization.

The Advocacy Chair is in charge of providing the members of FCOSU with educational materials relating to the mission and values of Friendship Circle International. This can include, but is not limited to, educating the members about particular disabilities during general body meetings, adding books, podcasts, and resources to the LinkTree with relevant information, and finding speakers to present at meetings with careers in the field. They are in charge of everything in relation to the spread of educational information relating to the organization's purpose amongst and with members.

The Fundraising Chair is in charge of contacting different businesses/organizations in order to coordinate fundraisers. They shall plan the fundraisers down to the when, where, what, why, and how under the direct supervision of the Events Coordinator. All of the money collected from the fundraisers shall go to the Treasurer.

Section 3: Advisor(s) or Advisory Board: Qualification Criteria

This organization shall retain an advisor at all times. Advisors of this student organization must be full-time members of the University faculty or Administrative & Professional staff. If a person is serving as an advisor who is not a member of the above classifications, a co-advisor must be chosen who is a member of these University classifications. They may offer guidance and support to the Executive Board or general body but may not have a vote.

The advisor is selected based on their interest in the club and how those interests line up with this organization's goals. The student organization will choose an Advisor through a majority vote on the Executive Board. The Advisor may remove and/or reinstate any Executive Officer, Chair, or general body member with due cause. The Advisor may be removed if they do not carry out their respective duties, provide help to the organization when necessary, and/or their behavior does not align with the organization's Constitution, The Ohio State Code of Student Conduct, University policy, or federal, state, or local law. The Advisor will receive notification of the intent of removal and a written rationale for their removal. The Advisor must be certified by the Office of Student Life every 2 years by completing Student Organization Advisor Training.

Section 4: Leadership Roles Terms and Conditions

The length of an officer's term is one year. One year annually begins after Memorial Day observance, aligning with The Ohio State University's first day of new student orientation. Please refer to the Registrar's website for a specific date for new student orientation. An officer may be removed from their position if they do not carry out their duties or attend meetings or is deemed unfit for the position. This decision will be the responsibility of the President and Vice President. The Advisor has the ability to overrule the decision of the President and Vice President as they see fit. They will be given one official warning and will be removed if they do not change their behavior. The officer being removed will receive notification of the intent to remove and a written rationale for removal.

Article V - Election/Selection of Organization Leadership

Elections shall take place at a general body meeting during the spring semester. The elections shall be publicized, by email and meeting announcements, at least two weeks prior to the elections.

Applications for all Executive Board and Chair positions are available to all active members 2 weeks prior to the elections. Applications are due the meeting prior to the elections meeting and must be recognized by the pre-existing President. Active members may apply for up to 2 Executive Board positions along a rolling election. The appearance of positions along the rolling election are as follows: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Events Coordinator, and Secretary. All active members applying for an Executive Board position must have one full semester of organization involvement. If an active member would like to run for an Executive Board position and has an excused absence for elections, then the candidate will be permitted to record their speech in place of giving a live speech. The recorded speech must adhere to the same criteria as the live speech.

At the election meeting, all candidates shall deliver a speech on their qualifications, strengths, and goals for the organization for no more than 4 minutes. This shall be followed by questions from any active member for no more than 2 minutes. After the speeches for each respective position, the active members shall cast secret ballots for the candidate of their choice. Each active member shall vote for their top 2 nominees in order of preference. If a candidate is listed at the top choice, they will receive 2 points from that vote. If a candidate is listed as the second choice, they will receive 1 point from that vote. No ballots will be accepted after voting takes place. If two or more candidates receive the same number of points,

active members shall vote again. If there is still a tie between two candidates, the pre-existing Executive Board alone must vote for the best candidate, with the Presidents' vote being determinative upon a tie vote.

Immediately after Executive Board elections, interviews for the Chair positions will take place. If a candidate has an excused absence, their interview can be rescheduled for a different date. Interviews for the Chair positions shall be conducted by the pre-existing President and Vice President. Each interview shall consist of the qualifications of the candidate, the strengths of the candidate, and what the candidate intends to bring to the respective position. There is no limit to the number of Chair positions each active member may apply for. The President and Vice President shall make a unanimous decision upon the selection of each Chair position by the time of the following meeting.

Article VI - Meetings and Events of the Organization

FCOSU will have weekly meetings that will be announced at the beginning of each semester. The President or Vice President must always be present at meetings; the rest of the Executive Board must also be present, but may be excused with reason.

The President presides over meetings, and in their absence, the Vice President runs the meeting. Attendance will be taken at every meeting, regardless of whether mandatory or not to determine whether or not a member is active. The quorum consists of a simple majority of the active membership, the President or Vice President, and the majority of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board will meet every week on the same day at the same time; however, reasonable adjustments may be made as needed. This meeting time and place will be decided annually based on the schedules of the board, but may be reassessed semester-wise if needed. Attendance is mandatory for the entire Executive Board unless a valid excuse is given ahead of time.

The President will meet biweekly with the Friendship Circle Ohio State Advisor and the Director of Friendship Circle Columbus. The President will also hold biweekly meetings with the entire Executive Board and the Chair positions. The President can decide to conduct one-on-one meetings with members of the Executive Board and Chair positions at their discretion. Executive Board members are expected to have an updated list of completed and future tasks, as well as questions for the President at these meetings. Failing to attend the meeting will require a rescheduling.

Any food or drinks served at meetings and events must be approved by Friendship Circle and LifeTown Columbus, and it must be in accordance with University policy.

The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 12th Edition* shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the by-laws of this organization.

Article VII - Attendees of Events of the Organization

The organization reserves the right to address member or event attendee behavior where the member or event attendee's behavior is disruptive or otherwise not in alignment with the organization's Constitution, The Ohio State Code of Student Conduct, University policy, or federal, state, or local law. Disruptive behavior includes any behavior that interferes with students, faculty, or staff and their access to an appropriate educational or work environment. It is the responsibility of the President and Vice President to address the individual's behavior and seek appropriate help from external resources (i.e. University Police) as they see fit. The Advisor reserves the right to overrule the decision of the President and Vice President.

Article VIII - Finances

All Organization funds are to be deposited and handled exclusively through the Treasurer. This Organization shall not have any undisclosed accounts.

Dues collected for active membership are \$10 per academic school year or \$5 per semester unless changed by the Treasurer with consent of the President. Dues are to be collected within the first month of the beginning of fall and spring semesters for members. New members have one month from attending his/her first meeting to pay dues in order to be considered active.

Article IX - Amendments

If an amendment or change of rules is proposed during a club meeting or an Executive Board and Chairs meeting, the person who proposed it will submit an official written proposal, and the Executive Board as a whole will discuss and decide on whether or not to include the amendment. A vote will decide whether the amendment is to be accepted. 2/3 of the Executive Board must agree in order for the amendment to pass. The Office of Student Involvement must review all amendments in the same manner as a completely new constitution.

Article X - Ratification

This constitution shall become effective upon approval by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the membership, and the Assistant Director for Student Organizations.

Article XI - Method of Dissolution of the Organization

This Organization may be dissolved by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote by all active and associate members. The Advisor reserves the exclusive right to disband and restart the Organization should any of the three (3) following circumstances arise with Friendship Circle Columbus approval:

- a. The Organization overall does not strive to fulfill or fails its Purpose, Principles and Values or violates several of the points of this Constitution, any law, or any university policy.
- b. The Organization as a whole encounters too many difficulties or obstacles to proceed as a functioning Organization striving to fulfill its purpose and uphold its principles and values.

c. The Organization may directly or indirectly inflict damage to an individual or group of individuals.

In the event of dissolution of this Organization, the residual assets of the Organization will be turned over to Friendship Circle Columbus. Any assets not directly owned by the Organization shall be returned to their respective owner.