

The Constitution of the Somali Students' Association



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PREAMBLE.

We, the members of the Somali Students' Association at The Ohio State University do hereby establish this Constitution in order that our purpose be realized to its fullest extent. This document has the purpose of setting the guidelines and rules our organization will operate by.

ARTICLE I. NOTES

The Somali Students' Association at the University shall also be referred to as the SSA.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization is to meet the academic, social, and cultural needs of the Somali students at OSU. It is also to promote unity amongst fellow Somalis, bring awareness to our nation's culture, heritage, and history to both Somalis and non-Somalis, and play a positive role in the Somali community.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

1. *Non-Discrimination Clause*

- a. There shall be no discrimination against any member based upon the member's gender, race, creed, color, religious affiliations, political affiliations, age, origin, disabilities, marital status, citizenship, or sexual orientation, with respect to terms or conditions of membership as contained within this agreement.

2. *Registered Member*

- a. Registered membership in SSA shall be limited to paid students, currently

enrolled at The Ohio State University – this includes all the branches thereof. Prospective registered members must complete the membership application, and their signature will ensure their compliance with this constitution. Fulfillment of these requirements will ensure the Registered Member with their voting rights and shall serve as an obligatory element for eligibility to serve as an SSA officer.

3. *Honorary Membership*

- a. Honorary membership shall be given to interested individuals who demonstrate a desire to support the activities of SSA. Honorary membership status shall be contingent upon a decision by the executive board and an individual's acceptance and compliance with the SSA constitution. Honorary Members shall have no voting rights, nor shall they be eligible to serve in office as an Executive Board member of SSA. Honorary membership shall be available, but not limited to: faculty and staff of OSU, community leaders, and non-OSU college students.

4. *Alumni Membership*

- a. Alumni Membership shall be open to any alumni of the Ohio State University. Alumni membership status shall be contingent upon an individual's acceptance and compliance with the SSA constitution. Prospective alumni members may be required to complete an alumni membership form as determined by the SSA secretary before benefiting from the rights of alumni membership. Alumni Members shall have no voting rights, nor shall they be eligible to serve in office as an Executive Board member of SSA, save the ex-officio.

5. *Membership Fee*

- a. An obligatory one-time per academic year membership fee will be charged. At no time will this fee exceed the amount of \$25.00 USD. The set amount for year shall be decided no later than the second week of the school year, and members may join at any time of the year.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

1. *Roles and Responsibilities*

- a. All officers are permitted to miss no more than three general body meetings per year. Additional absences must be discussed prior to the e-board meetings. Repeated violations of this rule will result in the impeachment process being enacted.
- b. All officers must let the president know at least four hours prior to the scheduled meeting of their absence.
- c. All officers are permitted to miss no more than one e-board meeting per semester, barring emergency circumstances. Additional absences must be discussed prior to e-board meetings or the impeachment process will be enacted.
- d. If officers miss more than the acceptable amount of meetings, they can and will be fined .50 cents to be donated a charity of the board's choice.
- e. All officers must be present at all SSA events unless excused by the president.
- f. All officers should be aware of the constitution, its rules, requirements and guidelines before agreeing to be on the board.
- g. All officers have a duty to disseminate information to all officers upon the confirmation of events and programs to be shared at next e-board meeting.
- h. All officers have a responsibility to seek out contacts, speakers, and

events and complete whichever responsibilities they have for events

- i. All officers will complete an event summary that will be used for reference for whatever program they will be leading.
- j. If an officer is unable to complete their duties for an extended period of time, the officers may vote to begin the impeachment process and an elected person to be removed from office. (See Article V)

2. *Positions*

a. *President*

- i. The President must serve one full year on the board before being able to run for the position.
- ii. The President shall oversee the executive board to make sure the requirements and duties of the constitution are being met. The President will help the executive board members in fulfilling their duties wherever it is necessary.
- iii. The President is the official spokesperson of SSA in meetings, interviews, institutions, and interactions with other organizations within the OSU community and outside.
- iv. The President is responsible for conducting all SSA executive board meetings.
- v. The President is responsible for communicating with other student organizations and maintaining a relationship with The Ohio State University Student Government as well as the SSA Advisor.
- vi. If conflicts arise it is the President's responsibility to ease tension so that the conflicts within SSA or outside do not jeopardize the organization. The President shall lead SSA away from actions that may bring harm to the existence of the organization and help prevent conflicts and find solutions.
- vii. The President shall work with Finance to maintain funds for SSA events.
- viii. The President shall work with those becoming members of the executive board to understand their respective roles and the SSA constitution.
- ix. The President shall determine the course of action to take on issues that the SSA constitution does not go into details.
- x. The President shall be in charge of forming an election committee, which shall be addressed under Article V.
- xi. If there is a tie in a vote, the President will be the tiebreaker.

b. *Vice President*

- i. The Vice President must serve one full year on the board before being able to run for the position.
- ii. The Vice President shall fulfill the President's responsibilities in their absence.
- iii. The Vice President shall oversee the Executive Board to make sure the requirements and duties of the constitution are being met. The Vice President will help the Executive Board members in fulfilling their duties wherever it is necessary.
- iv. Shall coordinate and oversee the weekly general body meetings, thereby creating a quarterly calendar, staying in constant contact with task forces and ad-hoc committees.

c. Secretary

- i. The Secretary shall take official minutes of all SSA Executive Board meetings with accuracy and sharing the information with the E-Board for review Of the E-Board meeting.
- ii. The Secretary prepares the Executive Board meeting agenda before the meetings.
- iii. The secretary is responsible for taking attendance at the start of every meeting and must document it in the meeting minutes.
- iv. The Secretary is responsible for reserving rooms that are necessary for SSA events as well as maintaining communication with the offices and completing paperwork that are necessary. They are responsible for maintaining good working relationships with the offices.
- v. The Secretary shall be in charge of maintaining the organization of the SSA office and keeping it clean.
- vi. The Secretary is responsible for keeping a membership binder that holds relevant information regarding SSA members.
- vii. The Secretary is responsible for sending the weekly email announcement to the SSA emailing list
- viii. Secretary is responsible for maintaining and updating the SSA e-mail listserv
- ix. The Secretary shall submit a weekly update to the Vice President of all transactions, reservations and any other relevant information.

d. Treasurer

- i. The Treasurer shall maintain all documentation and receipts of funds from SSA accounts as well as maintaining a ledger of transaction.
- ii. The Treasurer shall maintain a record of the SSA account, documenting transfer of all funds.
- iii. The treasurer must be a co-signer on all checks and financial transactions.
- iv. The Treasurer shall strategically plan the funding of events and guarantee sufficient funds are maintained to properly finance SSA events.
- v. The Treasurer is responsible for informing the Executive Board of SSA account information and confirming with the E-Board before releasing funds.
- vi. The Treasurer is responsible for providing the E-Board with a balanced account sheet.
- vii. The Treasurer shall work with the E-Board members to minimize event expenditure, find alternative funding possibilities or cutting strategies.
- viii. The Treasure is in charge of filling out all University based grants
- ix. The Treasurer shall produce a SSA budget projection before each semester to estimate expenses, a mid-semester analysis to evaluate usage of funds, and an end of the semester comparative analysis of projected versus actual fund utilization.
- x. The Treasurer shall work with the President to resolve emergency funding issues if they arise and will provide the Executive Board with a detailed update of their resolution.
- xi. Responsible for collecting all pledged donations raised through

fundraising and donating to the agreed upon organization in a timely manner. If more time is needed, inform the leadership so that necessary actions can be taken.

- xii. Identify potential revenue ideas through creating relationships with local businesses, campus departments, and local organizations
 - xiii. Ensure the revenue streams are sustainable will help SSA achieve its fiscal goals.
 - xiv. Work with the Events Chair to create fundraising events that will generate revenue for SSA.
 - xv. The treasurer shall maintain a working relationship with sponsors and donors by:
 - 1. Recording and documenting all sponsorships and donations made to SSA.
 - 2. Maintaining a sponsor-donor database
 - 3. Providing sponsors and donors with an invoice stating the exact amount and nature of the sponsorship or donation
 - 4. Corresponding with sponsors and donors by informing them periodically of SSA activity updates
 - 5. Providing sponsors and donors with special invitations to major SSA events.
 - 6. Making sure sponsors and donors are recognized for their contributions.
 - 7. Coordinating awards to sponsors and donors at major events or for major contributions to SSA.
 - xvi. The Treasurer needs to develop a fundraising plan for the academic year that will allow the SSA to meet budgetary needs. They will do so by requesting donations from various college departments, and coordinating on campus fundraising events.
- e. *Marketing Chairs (two persons)*
- i. MCC is responsible for publicizing all SSA activities and events by:
 - 1. Posting event information on all SSA social media sites.
 - 2. Posting flyers around campus.
 - 3. Coordinating with OSU Journal to ensure campus news coverage of SSA events and activities.
 - 4. Informing faculty and staff of SSA events
 - 5. Composing and distributing press releases for SSA major events.
 - ii. MCC is responsible for maintaining and utilizing the SSA camera to record activities and events for the yearly scrapbook.
 - iii. MCC is responsible for coordinating ticket sales for SSA events.
 - iv. MCC is responsible for coordinating SSA board photoshoots and all promo surrounding the organization and its events.
- f. *IT Chair*
- i. The IT chair is responsible for sending the weekly email announcement to the SSA emailing list
 - ii. IT Chair is responsible for maintaining and updating the SSA e-mail

listserv

- iii. IT Chair is responsible for maintaining the SSA website
- iv. IT Chair is responsible for maintaining all of SSA's technological needs throughout the school year.
- v. IT Chair must work with the Secretary to create powerpoints and or slides for SSA events.

g. *Outreach Chair*

- i. Outreach chair shall oversee involvement at the University such as the Multicultural Center and student-outreach events.
- ii. Shall be responsible for coordinating with other student clubs and organizations to cosponsor and collaborate on events and activities.
- iii. Create awareness of SSA throughout the community.
- iv. Collect, review, and distribute current information on Somalia to the general public.
- v. Responsible for coordinating, contacting, motivating, and following up with off campus community involvement activities
- vi. Responsible for recruitment through:
 - 1. Promoting registration of new members,
 - 2. Distributing organizational paraphernalia
 - 3. Utilizing promotional tables in the University Center
- vii. Responsible for Welcome Week participation and recruitment activities in coordination with the University's Admission department and office of Student Life.
- viii. Responsible for coordinating multicultural activities and maintaining a channel of communication with the relevant organizations of diversity and culture.

h. *Events Chairperson:*

- i. The Events Chairperson shall design an event curriculum that satisfies the educational needs of both the Somali and Non-Somali populations in The Ohio State University. This curriculum shall require the approval of the SSA-OSU executive board, and should reflect an understanding and appreciation of the needs of the SSA-OSU members and the campus community as a whole. Additionally, the event curriculum shall reflect the mission and goals of SSA-OSU.
- ii. The Events Chairperson shall collaborate with the Outreach Chairperson(s) and Academic Chairperson on the educational aspect of SSA-OSU.
- iii. The Events Chairperson shall be responsible for organizing not only education events or workshops, but also special events (i.e. relating to leadership, time management, public events, current events, etc.)
- iv. The Events Chairperson must submit a detailed itinerary to the president for review at least one week before small events like GBMs and at least four weeks in advance for major events.

i. *Academic Chairperson*

- i. Provide academic and scholarship opportunities to SSA members.
- ii. Reach out to academic units across campus to ensure the success of SSA

- members academically and professionally.
- iii. Promote education abroad opportunities to SSA members
- iv. Coordinate SSA study tables
- v. Coordinate volunteer programs for members to attend
- vi. Working to recruit SSA members on all regional Ohio State campuses and at Columbus State Community College.
- vii. Work with the Outreach Chair to come up with a mentorship program.
- viii. Have one academic GBM per semester
- j. Service Chair
 - i. The service chair will be in charge of philanthropic events
 - ii. Will have bi-weekly service outings for SSA members
 - iii. Create larger service events at least twice a semester
 - iv. Work directly with non-profits on campus and in the greater Columbus community in order to establish a relationship
 - v. One of the point people for fundraising dinner

Ex Officio

- i. The Ex Officio is primarily a source of consultation for the acting executive board of SSA-OSU, he or she has no voting rights or official impact on the decision making process of SSA-OSU
- ii. The Ex Officio shall assist the President to ensure that conflicts, potential or realized, internal or external to the organization, do not jeopardize the existence or functioning of SSA-OSU. The Ex Officio shall assist the President in steering SSA-OSU away from potentially harmful actions to the effective conduct of the organization and serving as a source of conflict prevention and resolution, both internally and externally, where and when such actions may be required by the organization.
- iii. It is not mandatory for the Ex Officio to attend weekly executive board meetings, focal SSA-OSU events and/or keep current of SSA-OSU business by way of the meeting minutes
- iv. The Ex Officio shall be responsible for creating a monthly report to submit to the Presidents concerning his/her insights based on past observations in meetings and experiences in SSA-OSU and suggestions to improve efficiency of SSA-OSU, while remaining creative and enthusiastic to help the present SSA-OSU Executive Board
- v. The Ex Officio shall submit a weekly update at executive board meetings, with the discretion of the President and VP, of all plans, activities, as well as any other relevant information
- vi. The Ex Officio shall be responsible for the maintenance, growth, and innovation of the SSA-OSU Alumni Association, not limited to recruitment of new members and strategic planning. It is highly expected that the Ex Officio will work in conjunction with IT Chair, Treasurer, and any relevant position on the SSA Executive Board

ARTICLE V. OVERSEEING BOARD

1. *The Overseeing Board is primarily a source of consultation for the acting executive*

board of SSA.

- a. They have no voting rights and will not impact the official decision making process of SSA.
- b. The Overseeing Board shall assist the President to ensure that conflicts, potential or realized, internal or external to the organization, do not jeopardize the existence or functioning of SSA. The Overseeing Board shall assist the President in steering SSA away from potentially harmful actions to the effective conduct of the organization and serving as a source of conflict prevention and resolution, both internally and externally, where and when such actions may be required by the organization.
- c. The Overseeing Board shall assist SSA executive board members with fulfilling their respective duties and organizational obligations.
- d. The Overseeing Board shall be responsible for creating a report to submit to the President, who will in turn present it to the SSA E-Board, concerning their insights based on past experiences in the SSA and suggestions to improve efficiency of SSA, while remaining creative and enthusiastic to help the present SSA E-Board. This should be done upon request.

2. *Members*

- a. SSA Overseeing Board shall consist of three members. Two alumni SSA members and the current advisor for the organization.
- b. The Overseeing Board shall serve a term of one calendar year.
- c. The Overseeing Board shall be an appointee of the outgoing SSA E-Board, preferably limited to the members of the outgoing SSA E-Board.

3. *Impeachment and Resignation Process*

- a. In the case of an officer not fulfilling the duties required of them in their respective position the following steps should be taken
- b. If an officer does not fulfill his duties, the overseeing board shall be contacted.
- c. The Overseeing Board will require substantial evidence that the officer in question neglected their position.
- d. Once substantial evidence is provided to and reviewed by the Overseeing Board, they and them alone will bring forth a vote at an E-Board meeting regarding the impeachment of the officer in question.
- e. The E-Board will vote on and with a majority of the votes the officer in question will be impeached
- f. In the event of a tie, the officer under review shall be put under probation and there shall be another vote in two executive board meetings time.
- g. Once an officer has been impeached, the responsibility of filling the now vacant seat belongs to the President. It is their job to find a replacement but the E-Board must vote or come in agreement on the replacement.
- h. In the case of an officer not being able to fulfill their duties and decide they can no longer hold their respective position. They have the option to resign. However, they must provide an adequate replacement that once again the E-Board must either vote on or come in agreement with. They must also ensure the transition of their replacement into their old position.
- i. General members are expected to conduct themselves in a way that reflects well on this student organization. If the general member is unable to meet and conduct

him or herself in a positive way then they shall be removed with 2/3 vote of the whole executive board.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS AND EVENTS

1) Meeting Structure:

- a) E-Board meetings during the academic school year are to be weekly, in the case of the exams or the beginning/end of the semester, they may be rescheduled.
- b) E-Board meeting cancellations are to be determined by the President and Vice President.

2) Event Structure:

- a) Each week should have a type of event, whether it is a general body meeting (GBM) or a larger type of event.
- b) Each GBM should have at least one “point person” or board member(s) leading the event. In the case of a larger event, the President and Vice President will automatically assume this role.

ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS

1) An election committee consisting of the president and other two appointed members shall be formed by the fourth week of January. The election committee shall present detailed election process information beginning the second week of February and ending after the registration deadline during the second week of March.

a) A: Election Committee Responsibilities

- i) Ensure the candidates understand election deadlines and rules.
- ii) Ensure the timely following of election registration and voting
- iii) Resolve disputes between candidates and the members
- iv) Provide information to members and executive board of any election matters.
- v) Election committee cannot be candidates for the year on the committee.

b) Voters must be registered members by the second Friday of March of that year.

c) The President shall call Voter registration on the second week of February before the elections. Voter registration shall last one month. Once the registration deadline has passed no one shall be registered.

d) Candidate Eligibility

- i) All candidates for every office must be an OSU-main campus student.
- ii) All candidates must have registered membership by Second Friday of March.
- iii) All candidates are required to be an OSU-main campus student for at least one more year.
- iv) Candidates for President and Vice President must be at least sophomores when holding office.

e) Term of office shall be one year beginning at the end of the transitional month of August and ending during the final week of transitional month of August of the following year.

f) Elections shall take place during the last week of April.

g) Elections shall be by paper ballot with a simple majority required to elect an office. In case of a tie, candidates shall be allotted 2 min to give a speech and a re-vote shall be taken.

h) Transitional Responsibilities

- i) The Executive board shall be responsible of handling all written documents to the newly elected executive board.

- ii) The Executive board shall be responsible of advising the new executive board of the responsibilities of each position.
- iii) The Executive Board shall be responsible for guiding the new board during their transitional period.

ARTICLE VIII. FINANCES

- 1) *It should be clearly stated that the Somali Student Association is not a profit-oriented group. Any money that we do accept is to provide for our members and to fund SSA sponsored or approved activities. If SSA should accept money on behalf of a charity, it will be stated as such before any money is accepted.*
 - a) *Acceptance of Contributions*
 - i) A record shall be kept of all donations made to SSA.
 - b) *Interest Free Expense Account*
 - i) SSA shall maintain an expense account.
 - ii) account will be an interest free bank account created and maintained for the expenses of SSA.
 - c) *Withdrawal of Funds*
 - i) The withdrawal of funds can only be done so with the signature of the President/Vice-President and the Treasurer.
 - d) *Allocation of Funds*
 - i) All funding of SSA activities will be decided upon and voted on by the E-Board.
 - ii) Voting on allocation of funds will be done so at closed E-Board meetings.
 - iii) For items or purchases less than \$50.00 no vote is required and can be done so by approval of the President and Treasurer combined.
 - e) *Regulatory Decree*
 - i) At no time shall SSA involve itself or approve funding of activities that expends more money than what is available. This decree exists so as to prevent SSA from accruing any debt.
 - ii) If SSA is in the process of planning an event that midway through comes to be in violation of this decree then the event will be cancelled or postponed, whichever is more befitting of the situation, so as to maintain the financial integrity of SSA.
 - f) *All accounts payable shall be paid within two (2) weeks of being incurred by SSA.*
 - g) *Records and Auditing*
 - i) SSA-OSU shall create and maintain a record of all financial activity at the end of each fall and spring semester, and submit this record to the Advisor for review.
 - ii) Treasurer will keep all financial records.

ARTICLE IX: REPLACING OPEN POSITIONS

1. In the case of an executive board position vacancy, excluding the Advisor, that position shall be up for an informal election.
2. Election will consist of an email sent to the SSA-OSU mailing list, notifying members of the vacancy and that the executive board is currently accepting nominations for the position.
3. There will be an informal meeting with the candidates.
4. The executive board will select the candidate by a two-thirds vote.

5. In the case of the vacancy of the Presidential position, the Vice President not only replaces the President but also nominates the new Vice President.
6. In the case of the vacancy of the Vice President, the President nominates the new Vice President.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

- 1) Proposal:
 - a) General members may propose amendments to E-board.
 - b) The amendment should be presented to at least five of the six of E-board members present
- 2) Discussion
 - a) At next E-board meeting, executive members discuss the proposed amendment including making any necessary modification to proposed amendment.
- 3) Ratification:
 - a) Six of the seven E-board members voting in support of the proposed amendment is needed to ratify it.

ARTICLE XI: EXTERNAL AFFILIATIONS

1. In the case that SSA must be represented in the form of a flag, only the flag of the Federal Republic of Somalia shall be used.
2. The SSA is a strictly non-partisan organization with no political affiliations.
3. The SSA in no way is affiliated with any other organization or association but may collaborate with organizations on and off the Ohio State Campus on events or projects.
 - a. Once a semester, there shall be one meeting designated to discuss relationships with other student organizations to determine areas of collaboration.