



## **Constitution and By-Laws for the Orthodox Tewahedo Club (OTC)**

I, founder of OTC, hereby attest to writing the Constitution and By-Laws. The following document consists of the official constitutional guidelines and by-laws for the organization: Orthodox Tewahedo Club. Every year after elections, this document must be reviewed and learned by the new E-board in order to properly and fairly conduct this organization. Changes to the constitutions and by-laws are **NOT** encouraged, **BUT** if a substantial circumstance requires one to do so, the officer must have the advisor's approval along with the consensus of the E-board (2/3 consensus, not including yourself). Official changes may not be made the same day they are proposed to the board. Changes that have been approved must be dated and signed with first and last initials in parenthesis at the end of the written change in this document (to maintain fairness, the original author of this document has provided signature by attesting to writing this in the very first sentence). All in all, attempt to avoid amendments (affiliation with Debre Selam Kidus Gabriel church and Father Yared are **NOT** subject to alteration). One reasonable alteration one may propose is a possible expansion of the E-board or additional officer positions to lighten the workload among the board. Constitution and by-laws are presented to maintain an equitable, inclusive, and purposeful foundation for OTC and therefore must remain that way upon potential modifications. Each E-board officer must be well-read on the document and must have **at least** one physical copy with them. Each E-board officer must sign, date and agree at the bottom of the last page and give it to the advisor for record keeping (either physical copy or electronic copy). The purpose of this is to maintain integrity and honesty for the sake of the students. In the case of (a) club member(s) recognizing possible fault in the conduction of (an) E-board officer(s), the member is within full rights to raise the issue to first, the officers; and if not settled, next, to the advisor. The same process of confrontation applies to E-board officers who want to report misconduct. Signing this document ensures you are aware of the constitution and by-laws and are responsible for carrying them out properly as well as rectifying your mistakes. E-board officers are at risk of formal removal from the board entirely upon unequivocal evidence of intentional and/or persistent misconduct. Potential removal can also be due to the lack of carrying out specified duties. In the event an E-board officer is going through a mental/physical health crisis and/or struggling to juggle their academic responsibilities along with conducting this organization, they may be formally excused for as long as they need, in which case a stand-in will be put in their place. This is to ensure the well-being and steady academic performance for each student, OTC is not meant to retract you from your personal and academic responsibilities! Read on for more guidelines and instructions.

### **Constitution:**

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

**Section 1: Name:** The official name for this student organization (**NOT** subject to change) is the *Orthodox Tewahedo Club*. Abbreviations are: *OTC*.

**Section 2 - Purpose:** The ultimate objective of this organization is to equally engage Christians (including all denominational ones) and non-Christians alike to discuss and learn the theology/practices of Apostolic Christianity. OTC specifically focuses on the Oriental Orthodox church (more specifically the Ethiopian and Eritrean rite). The reason behind excluding the rite (Eritrea and Ethiopia) in the title is to be more representative of the entire Orthodox church, which includes four other rites (Syrian, Coptic, Malankara and Armenian). The idea is to also reduce any assumption of this organization being cultural/ethnic based as it is solely about faith and includes everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, etc. The goal is to provide more knowledge on the faith to Orthodox brothers and sisters with the hope that they grow from being nominal Orthodox Christians to faithful Orthodox Christians. The purpose of this club is to also bring unity amongst the Orthodox and, overall, Christian population in order to emphasize our identity as siblings in Christ before anything else. This includes providing an environment on campus where Christians can confide in one another and help each other live a spiritual life within the college atmosphere. The club is equally designed to bring curious non-believers to learn for their own varying reasons, and upon their decision, hopefully accept the faith and join the family! The overarching intent of OTC is to share the gospel, and with those teachings, improve the state of the greater society through service/charity work and building friendships.



### **Section 3 - Non-Discrimination Policy:**

*“The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a diverse community to reflect human diversity and to improve opportunities for all. The university is committed to equal opportunity, affirmative action, and eliminating discrimination. This commitment is both a moral imperative consistent with an intellectual community that celebrates individual differences and diversity, as well as a matter of law.*

*Ohio State 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.”*

#### **Demographical Discrimination:**

*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.*

#### **Sexual Misconduct:**

*As a student organization at The Ohio State University, the Orthodox Tewahedo Club (OTC) 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>.*

**\*Note:** Non-discrimination policies outlined above are to be adhered to **without** comprising the beliefs of the Holy Bible and The Orthodox Church. There is absolutely no place for discrimination in the Christian faith.

*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](mailto:titleIX@osu.edu).*

### **Article II - Membership: Qualifications and categories of membership.**

There are no qualifications for membership. Every person of every background (religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) are all able and encouraged to be members of OTC. Regional campus OSU students (Lima, Mansfield, Marion and Newark) as well as non-OSU students in the Columbus area are permitted to join. Non-OSU students outside of Columbus or the state of Ohio entirely are permitted to be members as well. In addition to weekly meetings being in-person, meetings will also be live on zoom for members outside of Columbus or the state of Ohio.

For educational and leadership development purposes, OSU requires that student organizations such as, OTC, are to be student initiated, student lead, and student run. The founder of OTC (no longer being an OSU student) as well as the collaborating priest (both individuals labeled on the top right hand corner of the first page) are involved to the extent of advisory and assistance, they are **not** permitted to take the overwhelming responsibilities/duties of an officer. In addition to defining membership, Article II includes explaining the benefits offered to members of OTC (specified on the next page):



OTC members will be granted valuable learning resources, access to clergymen mentoring/teaching, and visitation to different oriental orthodox churches and celebrations.

Different members and their rights/benefits:

*Note: Rights and benefits of OTC not mentioned for a particular group indicates no access to the right/benefit.*

**OSU students-** This group is granted full rights and benefits to OTC. This includes the ability (upon fulfilling qualifications specified below in Article IV) to run for office. This group is also considered eligible recipients of whatever item is purchased and distributed by OTC, granted by OSU (i.e., food, transportation, pins, etc.).

**Regional OSU students-** This group is also granted full rights and benefits to OTC. This includes the ability (upon fulfilling qualifications specified below in Article IV) to run for office. Although, this group must be fully aware of possible additional responsibilities such as transportation, since all events/meetings under OTC are to be held on main campus. If student is not able to carry out the duties, it is highly advised to not run for an E-board position or to wait and do so upon transferring to main campus. This group is also considered eligible recipients of whatever item is purchased and distributed by OTC, granted by OSU (i.e., food, transportation, pins, etc.).

**Non-OSU students in the Columbus area-** Depending on the provider and nature of the event, this group may also be recipients of whatever item is purchased and distributed by OTC, granted by OSU (i.e., pins, transportations, stickers, food, etc.).

**Non-Columbus/Ohio state residents-** This group is not granted any official rights or benefits. However, this group may be eligible recipients of any item provided by OSU depending on the nature of the event. This group is permitted and encouraged to attend meetings (in-person/virtually) for their own development, and access the information given for learning purposes. The zoom link for virtual attendees will be distributed with a code/link given to members who've filled out the google form sign-up exclusively for safety reasons.

**NOTE:** For potential candidates, you **MUST** attend at least **HALF** of the meetings available in a semester. Otherwise, you are not granted the right to run for office. For example: if there are 10 meetings in the Autumn semester and 10 meetings in the Spring semester, you must have attended a total of 10 meetings by the end of the school year (Autumn + spring semester = 1 school year). Youth group meetings at *Debre Selam Kidus Gabriel Orthodox Church* count towards this attendance, however, **25%** (give or take) of the meetings you attend must be campus-based. For example: if there are 15 total meetings by the end of the school year, then you are required to attend at least 7/8 meetings and only 2 of those meetings must be on campus. No exceptions, this is not subject to change. This is to ensure the proper candidates are running and OTC's integrity/purpose is protected + continued for future years. This also accounts for students' busy schedules, hence only half of the meetings being required in attendance. Students, upon fulfilling previous requirements specified, are only able to run for one academic year every two years. Therefore, if a student, for example, is elected to be Secretary for academic year AU25-SP26; the student may not run again for office until AU28-SP29 (so long as they're students). These are the regulations. All other rights specified remain regardless of attendance, running for candidacy is the only right with stipulations.

*II.a. As required by the Guidelines for Student Organizations, 90% of the membership of a student organization must include current Ohio State University students. Community or other non-student members are subject to temporary suspension with a majority vote of the Executive Committee.*

***Article III – Methods for Removing Members and Executive Officers***

Article III clearly defines the organization's procedures for removal of officers or members. Be sure to think critically about the process of removing members and include variables such as timeline, voting procedures, and the various reasons a member or executive officer should be removed.



*III.a. 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.*

*III.b. 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 Committee may act for removal upon a two-thirds affirmative vote of the executive board in consultation with the organization's advisor.*

*III.c. 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),*

*the executive board, in consultation with the organization's advisor, may vote to temporarily suspend a member or executive officer.*

**Article IV - Organization Leadership: Titles, terms of office, type of selection, and duties of the leaders.**

Organization leaders represent the Executive Committee and general membership and are elected or appointed from the ranks of the organization's current Executive board. The titles of organization leaders, the length of terms, specification as to which leaders are elected or appointed and by whom, and the general duties of each leadership position are specified below.

Below, clearly and thoroughly explicates the roles/positions that will be fulfilled for OTC. The leadership committee for OTC will collectively be referred to as the Executive Board or E-Board.

**Primary Leader- President:** The role of this position is to distribute, produce and explain/teach content on the theology of the Oriental Orthodox Church as well as early church history. Content doesn't necessarily need to be in too much depth, but simply foundational, enough to equip Orthodox believers with sufficient knowledge on their faith and introduce non-orthodox individuals to the religion. This person is preferred to be moderately read on the faith (reading church fathers and the Holy Bible) to ensure they aren't misrepresenting the Bible + doctrines/dogmas (please utilize your resources including priests to ensure the accuracy of the information). There is no pressure to be an expert on these subjects, it is highly encouraged to seek the knowledge of others in the faith and fact-check the information you put out. This person can and is encouraged to use previous years' presentation slides and information as well as curating their own with additional information. This person is required to sign and date whatever presentation or document they produce, publish it on the website for mass access and explain the information to the members. The purpose of crediting your presentation is to inform the audience who organized the information so they may know who to direct questions to about said presentation. This person is also responsible for all social media outlets, this includes posting flyers/infographics on Instagram and tweeting prayers/bible verses and updating the website (if a social media position is needed/desired to lessen the responsibilities of the president, you may add an officer position to the constitution through the proper process as outlined on the first page, first statement. The founder is also permitted to take on the role of social media content in accordance with the officers' desire). This person **MUST** be Oriental Orthodox (of any rite: Ethiopian, Eritrean, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Malankara) and **MUST** adhere to **ALL** doctrines of the faith. A person who doesn't identify as such and adhere to the belief is **NOT** an eligible candidate. Catechumens may be considered for the role depending on how far along they are in their journey; evaluation by the current E-board, founder and/or priest is encouraged. The reason for this is to ensure the goal of OTC is being executed; this would not be doable if this person's beliefs are in contention with that of the church.

**Secondary Leader- Vice President:** The role of this position is to organize written documents concerning OTC's status, regulate meetings and attendees as well as recruit members through advertisement. This person will oversee all recorded information regarding the attendees/members, and possible formal agreements between OTC and other organizations. This person will specifically make and distribute sign-in sheets that must include space for names, lastname.# (or personal email address for non-OSU members), check-in time and check-out time. This person will



also be responsible for making live zoom calls for certain meetings and sending the link/code via email chain. This person will also publicly advertise OTC as well as assist new people in becoming members, i.e. adding people to the email chain, group chat, etc. This person **MUST** be Oriental Orthodox (of any rite: Ethiopian, Eritrean, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Malankara) and **MUST** adhere to **ALL** doctrines of the faith. A person who doesn't identify as such and adhere to the belief is **NOT** an eligible candidate. Catechumens may be considered for the role depending on how far along they are in their journey; evaluation by the current E-board, founder and/or priest is encouraged. The reason for this is to ensure the goal of OTC is being executed; this would not be doable if this person's beliefs are in contention with that of the church.

**Secretary/Service & Community Outreach Chair:** The role of this position is to do all necessary forms of outreach amongst not only the University, but the greater Columbus community. This includes forming relationships with other student organizations, reaching out to charity groups to organize fundraisers, searching for and establishing volunteer opportunities, connecting with churches, scouting for guest speakers, etc. This person should attend 75% or more of the charity/volunteering events. For the service events this officer cannot attend, **at least one** other officer must be there. They also must keep a record (written or electronic) of members who've participated. This person **MUST** be Oriental Orthodox (of any rite: Ethiopian, Eritrean, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Malankara) and **MUST** adhere to **ALL** doctrines of the faith. A person who doesn't identify as such and adhere to the belief is **NOT** an eligible candidate. Catechumens may be considered for the role depending on how far along they are in their journey; evaluation by the current E-board, founder and/or priest is encouraged. The reason for this is to ensure the goal of OTC is being executed; this would not be doable if this person's beliefs are in contention with what they are putting forth as truth.

**Treasurer:** The role of this position is to essentially take care of all financial responsibilities concerning OTC. This person is responsible for regulating the funds that OTC receives, keeping record and track of potential charity events, conversing with student management for any financial needs, distributing and budgeting OTC funds, organizing and regulating monetary events. This person **MUST** be Oriental Orthodox (of any rite: Ethiopian, Eritrean, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Malankara) and **MUST** adhere to **ALL** doctrines of the faith. A person who doesn't identify as such and adhere to the belief is **NOT** an eligible candidate. Catechumens may be considered for the role depending on how far along they are in their journey; evaluation by the current E-board, founder and/or priest is encouraged. The reason for this is to ensure the goal of OTC is being executed; this would not be doable if this person's beliefs are in contention with what they are putting forth as truth.

*Note: Each E-board officer is required to attend **75% or more** of the meetings they organize on campus (this **does not** include the youth group meetings at Debre Selam Kidus Gabriel Church). In the event an officer is absent, there must be **at least two** officers at the meeting. Failure to follow this accordingly may result in a direct removal of the individual from the E-board (unless a personal crisis is the cause, more details for this situation is outlined in the first statement on the first page).*

#### **Article V- Election / Selection of Organization Leadership**

*The election rules should be enforced accordingly.*

As mentioned above, only Oriental Orthodox followers are permitted to run for office. Given OTC is theology focused and its purpose/objective is rooted in sharing the faith, those of the E-board must affirm the beliefs brought forth from the Oriental Orthodox Church. Ethnicity/race is **not** a factor in this, anyone can be Orthodox. New officers should be announced on the second to last or last meeting for the spring semester, applications will be open via google forum. These applications should be open for a period of **at least seven days** prior to announcing new officers. Applications should be fairly advertised/distributed and repeatedly announced so all eligible to run can do so. The candidates are elected upon a thorough review of their application by the E-board. Member voting-based elections will not be held for this organization due to possible inconsistencies including non-OTC members voting





and their votes going unnoticed, students voting for peers/friends with reasons not rooted in the betterment of OTC, bias, nepotism, etc. It is expected that the current officers of any year were voted in upon integrable decisions based on the foundation set in OTC its first year. This constitution covers any situation in which an officer is not fit to remain as one and/or give input on incoming candidates. Google forum must include these segments: the name of the potential candidate, lastname.# of the potential candidate, the personal email or phone number of the potential candidate, a section to specify the church the potential candidate is a part of (i.e. Syrian Orthodox, Eritrean Orthodox, an Orthodox catechumen, etc.), a list of officer positions to run for (president, vice president, secretary and treasurer), a section to list experiences in student clubs/leadership, a section to explain what their goals are with OTC, a section of agreement to the tenants of the faith, and a section to explain what the Orthodox faith means to them. These are the foundational required elements, although more can be added (it is highly encouraged to use the same application form used in OTC's first year of establishment).

***Article VI - Executive Committee: Size and composition of the Committee.***

The Executive Committee (like a board of trustees or directors) represents the general membership, conducts business of the organization between general meetings of the membership, and reports its actions at the general meetings of the membership. In many organizations, this Committee is comprised of the organization leaders, chairpersons of the standing committees, and sometimes ex officio positions from related student organizations.

***Article VII - Standing Committees (if needed): Names, purposes, and composition.***

These committees serve the organization leadership, the Executive Committee, and general membership. Standing committees are permanent and designed to carry out the basic functions of the organization. Often chairpersons of these committees are appointed by the organization leadership.

***Article VIII – Advisor(s) or Advisory Board: Qualification Criteria.***

Advisors of student organizations 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. The advisor is not required to attend meetings and/or events outside of the annual training session conducted by OSU. The advisor is required to administer any sort of mishap regarding the integrity of the organization (including E-board) before it is taken to a higher level of action. The advisor is only formally responsible for keeping file of signed constitutions and mediating internal issues.

***Article IX – Meetings and events of the Organization: Required meetings and their frequency.***

Required meetings and events and their number should be specified in the governance documents and should reflect the organization's expectations for all members. All are permitted to become members, although depending on status in OTC, members are given different rights.

*IX. Refer to Article II: Membership for more details*

***Article X – Attendees of Events of the Organization: Required events and their frequency.***

Refer to opening statement on the first page and Article III: Methods for removing members and executive officers

*X. 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.*

***Article XI – Method of Amending Constitution: Proposals, notice, and voting requirements.***

Refer to opening statement on the first page regarding amendments.



*XI. Any proposed amendments should be presented to the organization in writing and should not be acted upon when initially introduced. Upon initial introduction, the proposed amendments should be read in the general meeting, then read again at a specified number of subsequent general meetings and the general meeting in which the votes will be taken, and should either require a two-third or three-quarter majority of voting members (a quorum being present) or a majority or two-thirds of the entire voting membership of the organization, present or not. The constitution should not be amended easily or frequently.*

#### ***Article XII – Method of Dissolution of Organization***

Upon the official dissolution of the organization, Student Activities staff must be contacted to remove organization information from website.

#### **By-Laws**

By-laws contain the standing (permanent) rules of procedure of an organization. Items in the by-laws are covered in appropriate detail in the constitution. However, the two are kept separate because by-laws usually contain more detail and are subject to change more than that of the constitution and, therefore, may require different procedures for amending.

By-laws are permanent, however, than passing a general motion, which may require only a simple majority vote of voters present at a general meeting of the membership (a quorum being present). By-laws cannot run contrary to the constitution.

#### ***Article I – Parliamentary Authority***

The Robert's Rule of Order will be used to govern OTC's decision making except when these rules are inconsistent with the constitution and/or by-laws of the organization. These rules are of Western cultural origin and based on the premise that "though the minority shall be heard and absentees protected, the majority will decide."

"The rules contained in the By-Laws of OTC's constitution 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 II- Membership***

Refer to Article II of the constitution portion: Membership

#### ***Article III- Election / Appointment of Government Leadership***

Refer to Article V: Election [...] of leadership

#### ***Article IV- Executive Committee***

Specific duties of the Committee and its responsibilities to the membership.

#### ***Article V- Standing Committees (if needed)***

Specific duties of each committee and their responsibilities to the organization leadership, Executive Committee, and general membership.

#### ***Article VI - Advisor/Advisory Board Responsibilities***

Expectations of the advisor in the organization (e.g., availability, meeting attendance, support, etc.)



## Orthodox Tewahedo Club (OTC) at The Ohio State University

Founder: Kiya Hailu  
In collaboration with: Father Yared

### *Article VII - Meeting Requirements*

There must be a minimum of 10 qualifying members in order to conduct a voting process on matter concerning OTC.

### *Article VIII - Method of Amending By-Laws*

By-laws are in congruence to the constitution of OTC. Alteration is **not** encouraged, although there is leniency in amendment of the By-Laws specifically, if it doesn't contradict the purpose, integrity and constitution of the Orthodox Tewahedo Club. You may propose, in writing, an alteration at a general meeting (members included) and proceed to bring the proposed change up for a vote at the next general meeting with a 2/3 majority vote of the membership present (a quorum being present).

Constitution Rev. 10/30/2022