

## **Constitution:**

### **Article I: Name**

**Section 1** The name of this organization shall be Peers Advancing Literacy In Students at The Ohio State University hereinafter referred to as Pen PALS.

**Section 2** The mission of Pen PALS is to establish an outreach program which addresses some of the challenges faced in the Columbus City School District and similar low-income elementary schools across the country while simultaneously educating college students about these issues. Pen PALS aims to improve the writing skills of elementary school students by providing a personal connection to a college student via a pen pal relationship, one on one interactions, and seminars which aim to inform the mentors about various social justice issues.

**Section 3** As an organization which is meant to bring people together and create role models in young people's lives, Pen PALS 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.

### **Article II: Membership: Qualifications and Categories of Membership**

**Section 1** All currently enrolled undergraduate students in good academic standing at The Ohio State University (good academic standing defined as a Cumulative Point Hour Ratio of at least 2.00, as stated in Rule 3335-9-23 of the Ohio Administrative Code, found also in The Ohio State University Code of Student Conduct) shall be eligible to apply for membership in Pen PALS. The e-board will inform applicants of their membership status two-three weeks after they apply. Members are assigned pen pals on a first-come, first-serve basis based on the time they pay dues.

Pen PALS will consist of two types of members-- members who actively write to a pen pal, and members who appear on the waitlist. Both types of members will be able to participate in seminars, fundraisers, and alternative writing programs. In the instance of "give-aways," all members will be eligible.

### **Article III: Methods for Removing Members and Executive Officers**

**Section 1** If a member conducts themselves in a manner that hinders the organization- as listed in Article II of the Bylaws or is in violation of the Ohio State University Student Code of Conduct, they can be removed from the program. If a mentor receives a total of two strikes in one academic year, they will be removed from the program. One strike is given if the mentor does not write at all in an assigned week. A half strike is given if a mentor doesn't hand write their entry, but emails a letter for their pen pal that week.

**Section 2** In the case that a mentor has been removed from Pen PALS and then reapplies the following semester, the mentor will be considered as a new applicant and will be chosen as a mentor only if needed. This is a result of the mentor's previous participation commitment.

**Section 3** Any Executive Board Member of Pen PALS may be removed for sufficient cause. Sufficient cause for removal includes, but is not limited to: violation of the constitution or by-laws, any conduct deemed prejudicial to the best interests of the chapter, and any conduct deemed hostile towards a member of Pen Pals within the context of the organization. Prior to a vote on the matter of removal of an elected officer, the chapter Executive Board shall hold a formal hearing. The officer shall have the opportunity to personally appear at the formal hearing. The officer may present any defense to the charges before any action is taken. To ensure due process, the hearing shall go as follows: The Executive Board will first present how the officer has failed to perform their duties while in office and what ground there is for removing the officer from their position. The officer will then have a chance to defend themselves and explain their actions. There will then be a time set aside for any remaining questions to be asked by either the officer or the Executive Board. The officer will then be asked to leave the room and the remaining members of the Executive Board will each be allowed to make any final remarks before the Executive Board casts their vote to pardon or remove the member in question. The President and Secretary will then privately count the casted votes for either side. The Executive Board may act for removal upon a two thirds affirmative vote of the Executive Board. The officer will be immediately notified of the results.

**Article IV: Organization Leadership: Titles, Terms of Office, Type of Selection, and Duties of Leaders**

**Section 1** The (co)President shall:

- a. Serve as the face, leader, and primary contact for Pen PALS.
- b. Call, conduct, reserve meeting space, and prepare for the Executive Board Meetings.
- c. Help create goals for each Executive Board member and follow up on their completion.
- d. Attend President's Training as required by the Student Organization Guidelines.
- e. Serve in direct report to the following Ohio State University entities: the Vice President for Student Life, Assistant Vice President for Student Life, Associate Director of Student Philanthropy, Ohio Union Administration and Staff, the faculty advisor, and any other entities that the Associate Director of Student Philanthropy may deem necessary.
- f. Serve in direct report to any participating schools involved in the program including, but not limited to, the school board, teachers of the particular classrooms involved, and any administration within the buildings Pen PALS works with.

- g. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester.
- h. Work with an Executive Board Member and committee member, if it is voted that the specific committee is run unfairly, in order to create a new structure of the committee.
- i. Evaluate effectiveness of the organization by sending polls to teachers, mentors, and Executive Board members.
- j. Apply to outside applications which could better the organization.
- k. Lead various large projects to better the organization.
- l. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

**Section 3** Transportation Executives (two representatives) shall:

- a. Ensure the transportation of the journals between the school districts and The Ohio State University. This includes ensuring all journals from all classes are being picked up from the school.
- b. Coordinate assistance with loading and unloading the journals if desired.
- c. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester.
- d. Create and lead a transportation committee to aid in the transport of journals.
- e. Ensure efficient communication between school liaisons regarding journal dropoff and pickup
- f. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

**Section 5** The Communications Director shall:

- a. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester.
- b. Send out a routine weekly email to mentors concerning upcoming seminars, due dates for the journals, and any other necessary information (recurring on the same time and day).
- c. Respond to any emails in the Pen PALS email within at least two business days.
- d. Update the pairings in the situation in which an elementary student is no longer attending the school or is new to the school.
- e. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

**Section 5** The Marketing and Social Media Director shall:

- a. Respond to any emails and messages on social media platforms within at least two business days.
- b. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester.
- c. Find new ways to reach out to students.

- d. Photograph events such as the seminars and the end of the year event in order to better advertise the program in the future.
- e. Organize Pen PALS' involvement alongside leadership and be present at the Fall Involvement Fair to advertise for the program in order to recruit mentors.
- f. Have access to and post on all social media accounts created.
- g. Maintain and update the club website as needed.
- h. Advertise the application process and distribute the application for new and returning mentors, along with other applications throughout the year.
- i. Organize the planning and distribution of club merchandise.
- j. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

**Section 6** The Secretary shall:

- a. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester.
- b. Record all the happenings of each Executive Board meeting.
- c. Review the constitution at least once a year in order to ensure the organization aligns with its contents and review for grammar issues.
- d. Pair the Mentors with the Pen Pals at the beginning of each semester. When doing this, previous pairs should be kept together except for unusual situations.
- e. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

**Section 7** The Treasurer shall:

- a. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester.
- b. Attend Treasurer's Training as required by the Student Organization Guidelines.
- c. Ensure the materials necessary for journaling have been acquired at the beginning of the semester.
- d. Oversee all financial operations.
- e. Approve all financial undertakings the organization deems necessary.
- f. Head all fundraising events.
- g. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

**Section 8** The Seminar Coordinator shall:

- a. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester.
- b. Schedule and organize at least two (2) seminars for the mentors and/or Ohio State students each semester. Mentors shall be notified of these events at least one week in advance via the email sent by the Communications Director. Each topic should be approved by the Executive Board. Mentors should be asked

which topic areas they would like to see presented on at the beginning of the year.

- c. Keep track of attendance at all seminar events.
- d. Assist the Events Director when necessary, especially during the Spring Semester.
- e. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

**Section 9** The End of Year Events Director shall:

- a. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester.
- b. Plan at least one event at the end of spring semester which brings the Pen Pals to campus in order to meet their mentor. This includes organizing a date and time, transportation, activities, and advertising this date to pen pal mentors at least one month in advance via the Communication Directors emails.
- c. Work with the Vice Events Director to plan and execute the End of Year Event.
- d. Assist the Seminar Coordinator when necessary, especially during the Fall Semester.
- e. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

**Section 10** The Operations Manager shall:

- a. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester
- b. Create the application for New Membership and determine which Mentors wish to continue in the program in the future. Including running the application process and interviews.
- c. Keep a record of who has and hasn't completed the journals each week. Including sending emails and updating spreadsheets with accurate information. (Emails must be sent within 48 hours after the journal committee)
- d. Manage and run the journal reading committee that proofreads all letters and writes replacement letters each writing week
- e. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

**Section 11** The Recruitment Chair shall:

- a. Attend all Executive Board meetings- unless noted at least a week in advance and missing no more than two meetings per semester
- b. Organize the orientation meeting with an emphasis on member education.
- c. Organize Pen PALS' involvement alongside leadership and be present at the Fall Involvement Fair to advertise for the program in order to recruit mentors.
- d. Organize and lead two outreach events per semester (this can include collaborations with other organizations or campus-based programming).

- e. Attend 2 journal committees per semester unless a class/work conflict has been discussed with the Seminar Coordinator.

#### **Article V: Executive Committees: Size and Composition of the Committee**

**Section 1** The Transportation Executives, Seminar Coordinator, Events Director, and the Social Media and Marketing Director will have the chance to determine whether or not they wish to have a committee at the beginning of fall semester. If they choose to have a committee, the Communications Director will send out an email with an application. This application will be created with help of the Executive Board Members who wish to have a committee. The email will ask for pen pal mentors to fill out the application if they wish to become more involved with a particular position. The Executive Board Member will then review the applications and determine the size and members of their committee in a timely manner.

**Section 2** Each Committee will be headed by an Executive Board Member and will be run according to how they see best fit. The Executive Board Member must report what the committee has discussed and what progress has been made at each Executive Board Meeting.

#### **Article VI: Advisor(s) Qualification Criteria**

**Section 1** Advisor(s) of Pen PALS 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(s) and/or co-advisor can determine how involved they wish to be.

#### **Article VII: Meetings of the Organization: Required Meetings and their Frequency**

**Section 1** The Executive Board shall meet at least twice a month, with a regularly scheduled meeting (excluding summer term, winter break, and spring break). All Executive Board Members shall miss no more than two regularly scheduled meetings per semester. Missing more than two of these meetings would be grounds for removal from their position (as discussed in Article III Section 3). Additional meetings may be called by the President when seen fit. Attendance at these meetings is highly encouraged, however, will not count towards the attendance expectation.

#### **Article VIII: Method of Amending the Constitution: Proposals, Notice, and Voting Requirements**

**Section 1** The Constitution shall be amended each year by the President and the Secretary. The Executive Board will then be given notification that changes have been made and will be asked to review the changes. If there are concerns about the changes, this will be discussed at the following meeting.

**Section 2** If there is a conflict about what changes were made, a vote will be taken. The vote must also occur at a regularly scheduled meeting. If a member does not cast a vote, it is considered an abstention. The amendment must be approved by a majority vote.

**Section 3** The Bylaws can be amended by the Executive Board using the same process as amending the Constitution.

**Section 4** The Constitution shall take effect upon the approval by the Vice President for Student Life or their designee and by the current Executive Board Members.

**Article IX: Method of Dissolution of the Organization**

**Section 1** In the event that Pen PALS is dissolved, the Executive Board must unanimously decide to no longer continue the organization. All Executive Board Members must be present in order to vote. The voting must occur at a regularly scheduled meeting.

**Section 2** In order to make this decision, the President must give a statement addressing why the organization cannot continue. There will then be a period for questions concerning this decision and discussion about how the dissolution could be avoided. If no clear solution is found, the Executive Board may vote to remain or to dissolve. The President and Secretary will count the votes and report the results to the Executive Board.

**Section 3** In the case that any debt may exist, the Treasurer must present multiple options for eliminating this debt. The Executive Board will then vote on the most appropriate way of handling it. Voting will be handled as follows: for each option the Executive Board will be allowed to vote either yes or no, whether the option is a viable option. Once this has been done for each option, the Executive Board will then discuss if multiple options could be paired together. If so, this combined option will be put up against the option that previously received the most "yes" votes. If there was a tie for the highest previous vote, then a vote will occur where each Executive Board Member may vote for one option and the option with the most votes will then be posted against the multiple options previously discussed. A vote will then take place where each Executive Board Member shall vote for the best option to eliminate the debt. The option with the most votes will then be carried out by Pen PALS in a timely fashion.

**Section 4** In the case of dissolution, the Treasurer may form a committee in order to rid of any outstanding debt.

**Section 5** If there are any outstanding funds at the time of dissolution, the funds will be donated equally among the schools Pen PALS previously served.

## **By- Laws:**

### **Article I: Parliamentary Authority**

**Section 1** All matters shall be discussed at Executive Board meetings. All issues should be discussed by Executive Board Members at meetings and a reasonable consensus should be met in order to make any significant decisions.

### **Article II: Membership**

**Section 1** During new membership selections, each prospective member must submit an application for membership.

**Section 2** The new member application will be available by early September.

**Section 3** All qualified applicants will be permitted to partake in Pen PALS unless the number of elementary pen pals is fewer than the pen pal mentor applicants. In this case, returning pen pal mentors in good standing will be accepted followed by the new applicants who submitted their application on a first come first served basis. Pen pal mentors who were previously removed from the program will be paired last. If the number of applicants is less than the number of pen pals, the mentors will be asked if they would like to have multiple pen pals. If the number is still lower, the Executive Board will write to the remaining pen pals until new mentors are able to be paired with elementary pen pals.

**Section 4** In the event that each applicant cannot be paired with a pen pal, the applicant can choose to be placed on the waitlist. The mentors on this list can become a mentor if new elementary pen pals move into the school district, a pen pal mentor is removed from the program, or a pen pal mentor decides to no longer be active in the program. The waitlist will be created in the order that applicants request to be placed on the list. Mentors who were paired and had their pen pal move away will be placed at the top of the waitlist.

**Section 5** All pen pal mentors will be responsible for writing in their journal on weeks specified by the Executive Board. Pen pal mentors will also be encouraged to attend seminars as frequently as possible.

**Section 6** In the event that a mentor fails to write by the deadline specified by the Executive Board, the mentor will be contacted and informed that they have a strike. If a mentor is unable to write, they are able to submit a letter via email by the deadline specified by the Executive Board. If the mentor does this, they will only receive half a strike and will also receive an email confirming this half strike. Each pen pal mentor can receive two strikes before being removed from the program.

### **Article III: Election of Executive Board Members**

**Section 1** All Executive Board positions for the following year will be confirmed by spring break.

**Section 2** First, the President will announce whether or not they will be returning the following year. If they wish to return to the position, the rest of the Executive Board Members will vote if they wish for the President to return or be removed from the position. All Executive Board members present, excluding the President, must vote anonymously (a graduating senior can manage the handling of the election). If a member is unable to attend the meeting, they can submit their vote electronically to the Secretary. The President will only be removed from the position if 8/12 Executive Board Members vote to remove the President. If this vote is not reached, the official is able to resume his or her position the following year.

**Section 3** If the President is not returning the following year, the position will become available to all current Executive Board Members. Those who choose to run for the position will be asked to give a two minute, prepared speech as to why they would like to be the President. Once all speeches are heard, the President and the Executive Board Members who are not running will vote for who they wish to be President **anonymously**. In the case of a tie, the President will be the tie breaking vote if only two candidates are running. If more than two candidates are running, there will be another vote between the candidates with the most votes. Then, if there is another tie, the President will be the tie breaking vote. Each vote will be counted by the President and the Secretary in private. The President will then thank all Executive Board Members who ran for the position and then verbally announce the new President. This process should occur at the end of a regularly scheduled meeting.

**Section 4** If no Executive Board Members wish to fill the position, the position will be opened to the general body members. The application will be open for one week and the interviews will occur the following week with the current President and two other Executive Board Members present. The decision will be made within 48 hours of the final interview. All candidates will be notified of the decision via email.

**Section 5** Once the President for the following year has been decided, the rest of the Executive Board positions will be filled. To begin this process, a form will be sent to the Executive Board Members asking whether they intend to return to the Executive Board the following year. If not, their position will become available. If they do wish to continue being part of the Executive Board, they will then rank the positions they desire from 1, being the position they want the most to 9, the position they want the least. The current President will then look at the results and will look at which position each Executive Board Member wants the most. If the position is unattested, they will be placed in that position. If multiple people request a specific position, they will each give a two-minute, prepared speech explaining why they want the position. The vote will take place at a regularly scheduled meeting. All current Executive Board Members present at the

meeting, excluding the people running for the position, will vote. The member with the most votes will be assigned to that position for the following year. The Executive Board Member(s) who are not assigned that position will then fill one of the remaining roles.

**Section 6** Once all positions have been assigned, the Executive Board Members will have one week to contact the current President if they have any concerns about a member's ability to fulfill the role they were assigned. The President will then contact the questioned member and inform them of the concern. The remaining Executive Board Members will vote to determine the member's ability to serve the role they have been assigned at the following meeting. At the meeting, the President will first present the concerns communicated to them during the week. The questioned member will defend why they wish to stay in the role and members will have the opportunity to ask further questions. The questioned member will then leave the room and a vote will be taken. The Executive Board Member can only be removed by a vote greater or equal to 7/10 in favor of the member being removed. The results of the vote will be reviewed by the Secretary and President in private and will be revealed at the end of the meeting.

**Section 7** All positions not filled by this process will then be opened up to the general body members. Members interested in serving on the Executive Board will complete a standard application for the position. Once the application is complete, the applicant will be interviewed by the current President and two Executive Board Members. The interview will consist of standard questions and each interviewer will rank the applicant's response to each question on a scale of 1-5. The applicant with the highest application and interview score will be appointed to the position. If there is a tie, the President will make the final decision. Results will be emailed within 48 hours of the decision being made.

**Section 8** Each new Executive Board Member will be responsible for meeting with the previous Executive Board Member at least once before assuming their role. If the Executive Board Member has been voted out of their position, the new Executive Board Member will only meet with the President. New Executive Board Members are encouraged to attend a regularly scheduled Executive Board meeting prior to the end of the year.

**Section 9** The new Executive Board Members will officially acquire their positions after the final Executive Board Meeting. If an Executive Board Member resigns after being removed from their position, the responsibilities will be divided up among the other Executive Board Members until the new member is able to successfully and independently carry out their role. The new Executive Board Member would fill the role as soon as possible.

#### **Article IV: The Role of Executive Board Members' Committees**

**Section 1** Each Executive Board Member who chooses to create a committee will determine how their committee's tasks are divided and the responsibilities of each member based on the year and the needs.

**Section 2** If a committee member feels as if some aspect of the division of tasks is inappropriate or disproportionate and is displeased with it, the member has the right to come to a regularly scheduled Executive Board Meeting and make a testimony of the situation. The vote will occur at the next regularly scheduled meeting despite any possible absences. The Executive Board Member of this committee will be asked to leave the room for the committee member's testimony. The Executive Board Member can then make their case with the committee member removed from the room. Once both sides are heard, the Executive Board, with the exception of the Executive Board Member whose committee's organization was called into question, will vote whether or not the structure of the committee must change. Both people who gave testimonials must leave the room for the vote to occur. At least 6/10 Executive Board Members must wish for change for the request to be granted. The President and the Secretary will count the votes in private. The President will announce the results at the end of the Executive Board Meeting.

**Section 3** In the case that the Executive Board Member is found to be running an unfair committee, the President is responsible for meeting with the Executive Board Member and the committee member outside of regularly scheduled meetings in order to construct an agreed upon way to properly run the committee if possible. If not possible, the President will meet with each party individually and will independently create a plan of action.

**Article V: Advisory Board Responsibilities:**

**Section 1** The Advisor must complete necessary yearly documents per Student Organization guidelines. Any additional commitment is voluntary.

**Article VI: Method of Amending By-Laws:**

**Section 1** By-Laws may be amended once a year by the President and Secretary. Any concerns with these changes will follow the same procedure listed in Article VIII.