

## Constitution of “U of T Improv Club”

### 1. Article One - Name and Purpose

1.1 The official name of this recognized student group is “U of T Improv Club”

1.2 The official acronym or abbreviation of this group is: UofT Improv

1.3 The purpose, objectives, mission and/or mandate of the organization is outlined here:

To offer opportunities to students at the University of Toronto to perform, practice, and collaborate as improvisational artists through events, workshops, auditions and participation in teams. U of T Improv serves, not just as a singular unit, but as a multi-faceted, community centre of improvisational comedy. As such, U of T Improv offers various points of entry for involvement. For education, socialization, and fun, we offer weekly drop-ins run by our Club Headmaster(s). In addition to our drop-ins, U of T Improv offers financial, administrative, and marketing support to U of T student/faculty run improv teams who wish to submit and be recognized as a member. Note that “member” is not and should not function as an exclusive term that places any barriers of entry, besides the guidelines outlined. It is the job of the current executive team to hold themselves accountable, and the right of any U of T student, faculty member, or group to challenge barriers they see. The constitution is a tool for students to have the ability to defend and advocate for themselves and others. The final entry for involvement is the U of T Improv House/Performance team. Entry into the team requires movement through an audition and callback process for which 8-12 members are awarded spots. This team functions in a similar way to members of the U of T Improv Community Centre, wherein they have access to financial, administrative, and marketing assistance for any shows they decide to do. In addition, the House Team serves as the U of T representative for *The Great University Improv Coalition* as well as the creators and performers at any other House Team performances, traditionally including the U of T Drama Festival. The House Team’s involvement at the Drama Festival is under the discretion of the current executives, with room to grow and provide more opportunities for independent teams.

#### 1.3.1 Community Hub

The goal of the U of T Improv Community Hub is to provide as little barriers to financial and administrative assistance as possible. Therefore, the process of submission is simple:

A representative from an independent team may fill out the google form for the current school calendar year, indicating basic information, which may include team title, names of members, etc.

The team will then be asked to agree to a short list of guidelines that

group must adhere to in order to be approved and continuously receive assistance. This guidelines as of July 2020 are:

- 1) Teams must not endorse, perform, or participate in a manner that reflect ideologies which promote racism, transphobia, homophobia, anti-semitism, or any form of discrimination as per the Ontario Human Rights Code's *Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination*.

Any individual team members which are found not to be adhering to the above mentioned guidelines do not reflect the type of creativity or personhood that U of T Improv encourages, and will have their membership status terminated. In the context of the Community Hub, this means that, effective immediately, the team with said member will immediately not receive funding. The team will also be brought to the attention of Ulife and other powers at the University of Toronto.

If the current executives do not follow this process, it is in the right of any member to use this constitution to bring harmful incidents to the attention of Ulife and other powers at the University of Toronto.

U of T Improv Club can provide community hub teams with financial and administrative support including the following:

- 1) Room bookings at the University of Toronto. Note that room booking privileges are for clubs only. However, U of T Improv Club can assist with room bookings by hosting an event and inviting clubs to this event.
- 2) Team recruitment and audition process
- 3) Venue bookings including funding from U of T Improv Club's TD Bank account, the profits minus the venue payment go directly to the members of Independent Teams to distribute how they please and the rest is returned to the U of T Improv Club's TD Bank account.

The title of a U of T Improv member does not serve any function other than the team's ability to access internal resources, including receiving financial support from the U of T Improv community and are for internal use only. Teams are not required to advertise or state their affiliation with U of T Improv's Community Hub.

### 1.3.2 Drop-in Club

The Drop-in Club provides an educational and casual space for U of T students and faculty to participate in an interactive meeting, hosted once a week by the current U of T Club Headmaster(s). This space welcomes anyone, but participants must respect our guidelines against discrimination.

### 1.3.3 House Team

UofT Improv shall have a House Team with a cast ranging from 8-12 members, but this number is subject to review according to the current executives' judgement. This House Team will meet

regularly for rehearsals. The number of times a week, and specific days of rehearsals, as well as any performances or competition the team will participate in are subject to the current executives' judgement.

This team functions in a similar way to members of the U of T Improv Community Centre, wherein they have access to financial, administrative, and marketing assistance for any shows they decide to participate in. In addition, the House Team serves as the U of T representative for *The Great University Improv Coalition*, as well as the creators and performers at the U of T Drama Festival and any other House Team performances. The House Team's involvement at the Drama Festival is under the discretion of the current executives, with room to grow and provide more opportunities for independent teams.

The House Team does not have any financial preference over Independent Teams. The only financial difference between the makings of the House Team and an Independent Team is that all profits made under the House Team go directly back into the U of T Improv Club's TD Bank account to support further performances and club events.

## **2. Article Two - Membership and Membership Fee**

2.1. The group shall maintain a list of group members.

2.2. Voting membership is open to all registered students of the University of Toronto.

2.2.1 To become a member you must actively participate in a minimum of (1) of the following points of entry:

- 1) Attend a minimum of two drop-ins
- 2) Be a part of an independently recognized U of T improv team
- 3) Be a performer in the current calendar year's House Team

2.3. Voting membership is open only to registered students of the University of Toronto.

2.4. Non-voting membership is open to University of Toronto staff, faculty, alumni, and to persons from outside the University. Unless otherwise stated, non-voting members do not hold any rights awarded to voting members.

2.5. The membership fee will be \$0 per year.

## **3. Article Three - Rights of Members**

3.1. All members may apply for a full refund of their membership fee within one (1) month of becoming a member.

3.2. All voting members have a right to attend all general meetings of members.

3.3. All voting members have a right to cast votes at all general meetings of members.

3.4. All voting members have a right to stand for election unless otherwise stated in this document.

3.5. All voting members have a right to cast votes in all group elections and referenda.

- 3.6. All voting members have a right to propose and vote on amendments to this constitution.
- 3.7. The rights prescribed in Article Three are not awarded to non-voting members as described in Article Two.

#### **4. Article Four - Executive Committee**

- 4.1. The term for all positions on the Executive Committee shall be from May 1st to April 30th.
- 4.2. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of four (4) to five (5) (depending on the number of headmasters, either 1 or 2) voting members.
- 4.3. All voting members of the Executive Committee must be currently registered students of the University of Toronto.
- 4.4. Non-voting members may hold only non-voting positions on the Executive Committee.
- 4.5. The maximum amount of non-voting positions on the Executive Committee shall be one (1) position or ten per cent (10%) of the positions on the Executive Committee, whichever is greatest.
- 4.6. Persons holding non-voting positions on the Executive Committee cannot serve as an officer, financial authority, signing authority, primary contact, or secondary contact.
- 4.7. No person may serve as a financial authority or signing authority for the group if they are currently serving as a financial authority or signing authority for another recognized student group at the University of Toronto.

#### **5. Article Five - Executive Committee Composition and Duties**

##### **5.1. The President shall:**

- 5.1.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
- 5.1.2. Oversee the operations, management, and success of the group,
- 5.1.3. Serve as spokesperson for the group,
- 5.1.4. Hold signing and financial authority along with the Treasurer,
- 5.1.5. Preside over meetings of the Executive Committee and/or members,
- 5.1.6. Ensure a transition of office from one year to the next,
- 5.1.7. Run the House Team.

##### **5.2. The Vice-President External shall:**

- 5.2.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
- 5.2.2. Communicate with any external groups,
- 5.2.3. Organize travel and accommodations for out of town performances,
- 5.2.4. Be the first person of contact for any team connected through the Community Hub,
- 5.2.5. Book venues for shows put on by the House Team and Teams in the Community Hub,
- 5.2.6. Handle official correspondence,
- 5.2.7. Assume duties of the President in their absence,
- 5.2.8. Ensure activities of the club comply with policies of the University of Toronto,
- 5.2.9. Oversee the various committees,
- 5.2.10. Coordinate organizational recruitment efforts.

##### **5.3. The Vice-President Internal shall:**

- 5.3.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,

- 5.3.2. Record all financial transactions of the group,
- 5.3.3. Hold signing and financial authority along with the President,
- 5.3.4. Maintain a budget of income and expenses,
- 5.3.5. Advise members on financial position of the group,
- 5.3.6. Prepare an annual budget for the group.

**5.4. The Club Headmaster(s) shall:**

- 5.4.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
- 5.4.2. Maintain a list of group members,
- 5.4.3. Maintain the group website and member contact list,
- 5.4.4. Record notes and motions for meetings,
- 5.4.5. Notify all members of general meeting,
- 5.4.6. Handle official correspondence of the organization,
- 5.4.7. Plan and manage events for the weekly club drop-in session,
- 5.4.2. Be the point of contact for special guests and workshop leaders,
- 5.4.3. Advocate for and coordinate club member participation in the House Team's regular Toronto shows,
- 5.4.4. Represent specific club interests at all U of T Improv meetings, executive or otherwise,
- 5.4.5. The headmaster as of April 2019 is also the main coordinator for U of T Improv's social, media Instagram account. This is subject to change under the discretion of the current executives.

Additional responsibilities of all executive positions may include:

- 1. Assuming duties of other executive members as required.

**6. Article Six – Elections**

- 6.1. All voting positions on the Executive Committee shall be filled through an annual election.
- 6.2. All voting group members shall be eligible to seek nomination to and cast a ballot for each voting position.
- 6.3. All non-voting group members shall be eligible to seek nomination only for non-voting positions on the Executive Committee.
- 6.4. Non-voting group members shall not be eligible to cast a ballot for any elected position.
- 6.5. The nominee winning the plurality of votes cast in the election for each position shall be deemed the winner.
- 6.6. On the condition that multiple candidates are to be elected for a single position, the nominees winning the largest share of the votes cast shall be deemed the winners until all positions are filled.
- 6.7. The elections must be held in a nonbiased manner. No individual who is seeking election may participate in planning or administering the election.

## **7. Article Seven – Finances**

- 7.1. The Treasurer shall keep an active record of income and expenses.
- 7.2. The Treasurer shall present the group's updates on the group's financial position at annual general meetings.
- 7.3. The Executive Committee must approve all expenditures over \$100.00 through a majority vote at a meeting of the Executive Committee.
- 7.4. The group may not engage in activities that are essentially commercial in nature.
- 7.5. The group will not have as a major activity a function that makes it an on-campus chapter of a commercial organization.
- 7.6. The group will not provide services and goods at a profit when that profit is used for purposes other than those of the group.
- 7.7. The group will not pay salaries to any of its officers.
- 7.8. Any club profits from the House Team (be it short-termed non-transferred funds or cash or returned money from Community Hub rentals) shall at the end of each year be transferred to the club TD bank account and rolled over for the next year.

## **8. Article Eight – Meetings**

- 8.1. The Executive Committee shall meet monthly. The quorum for Executive Committee meetings shall be 50%+1 of the voting members of the Executive Committee.
- 8.2. The group shall hold general meetings at least twice per year to provide the general membership an opportunity to review the group's annual activity plan, financial health, and propose or vote on constitutional amendments.
- 8.3. The Executive Committee must announce the date of a general meeting to the general membership at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

## **9. Article Nine - Termination of Membership**

- 9.1. The Executive Committee may revoke the membership of any member of the club who commits an act negatively affecting the interests of the club and its members, including non-disclosure of a significant or continuing conflict of interest.
- 9.2. A vote to revoke membership must be held at a meeting of the Executive Committee.
- 9.3. A two-thirds majority of the Executive Committee is required to approve any motion to revoke membership.
- 9.4. Any member facing removal shall have the right to appeal the decision of the Executive Committee to the general membership.
- 9.5. In the case of an appeal, a simple majority vote at a meeting of the general membership shall be required to sustain the revocation of membership.
- 9.6. Following a termination of membership, the member will be removed from the club's membership and will lose any privileges associated with being a member of the club.
- 9.7. Executive Committee members are subject to the same termination of membership process as general members.
- 9.8. U of T Improv has absolutely no tolerance or room for racism, and thus, takes an active stance of anti-racism.

This club was built within several institutions, both within higher education as a whole, and within the walls of the University of Toronto, which continually place barriers upon black, indigenous, and communities of colour. U of T Improv's history has been built upon the privilege of many white individuals given the opportunity to lead, and on the suffering and exclusion of BIPOC. U of T Improv has thus played a role in these barriers

It is therefore the reason why it is important to emphasize the following:

- 1) Racism is not allowed in any capacity, in any sectors at U of T improv. If a team member, whether they be involved in drop-ins, the Community Hub, or the House Team, is found to have performed, behaved, or spoken in any way which is aligned with racist ideologies, they will not be allowed to participate in any UofT Improv activity. In special cases, they may receive a warning (see below).
- 2) As of October 2020, U of T Improv has created new opportunities in order to prioritize a future where BIPOC leadership is uplifted. There are now three points of entry, two of which require no barriers to join. As of April 2021, members of any three entry points may run for an executive position, only one being attached to the House Team. It is the hope that with time, we can see a transition of leadership and opportunity for BIPOC individuals, with an emphasis on Black improvisers, who will be given the chance to shape the future of UofT Improv.
- 3) UofT Improv wants to provide a space where individuals are free and safe to advocate for themselves and others. Any individual who wishes to come forward to express any sort of discomfort or violation, has the right and is encouraged to do so. That being said, it is the job of the current UofT Improv executive committee to ensure that prejudice is not a staple within the community, and thus, their obligation to educate and accountability is to the various improv spaces. Each year, the executive committee must provide a system where individuals can report uncomfortable and unacceptable behaviour.

First of foremost UofT Improv strives to be a place of education and accountability. It is the hope that we can create an environment where we can teach and encourage anti-racism, and provide a space where individuals can re-evaluate their actions and grow as individuals. That being said, we will not tolerate individuals who demonstrate racist-- as well as homophobic, transphobic, anti-semetic-- or any other behaviours which target, demean, and attack members of vulnerable communities. Individuals who demonstrate this behaviour will therefore not be allowed to participate in any U of T Improv activity.

As of November 2020, independent teams made up of BIPOC, non-U of T members are encouraged to apply for membership recognition in the U of T Improv Community Hub. This provides them full access to funding, administrative, and marketing resources. It does not provide them with rehearsal space, because this is against University Policy. This is a first step among many that U of T Improv will be taking to become more accessible and inclusive.

## **10. Article Ten – Amendments**

- 10.1 All constitutional amendments shall require a 2/3 majority vote to be passed at a general meeting.
- 10.2 All voting members may propose and vote on amendments to the constitution.
- 10.3 The Executive Committee shall submit the revised constitution to staff in the Division of Student Life at the University of Toronto within two (2) weeks.
- 10.4 Amendments to the constitution shall take effect only once the revised constitution has been approved by staff in the Division of Student Life at the University of Toronto.