

Constitution of “University of Toronto Mandarin Debate Association”

1. Name

The official name of this recognized campus group is “University of Toronto Mandarin Debate Association”

The acronym or abbreviation of this group is: UTMDA

2. Purpose and Objectives

Purpose:

1. To provide an equal opportunity for students of all skill levels to learn and practice debate in Chinese,
2. To promote a positive environment for students to socialize in and to connect with their fellow club members,
3. To encourage students to think intelligently and critically on challenging issues.
4. To improve spoken Chinese for native and non-native speakers.

Guiding principles:

1. Accept any interested student into the club,
2. Provide new members of the club with basic debate training sessions,
3. On a regular basis, provide opportunities for all members of the club to practice debate,
4. On a regular basis, organize social events for all members of the club to familiarize with each other, and make connections,
5. Assign experienced debaters to new members to provide individualized guidance,
6. Select a wide range of debate topics and debate structures, challenge the club members to address current world problem, being critical toward established world orders, and rethink ancient wisdoms.

Club events:

- 1) Debate practice: club members are slotted into groups to debate, while being judged and evaluated by either their fellow peers or more experienced debaters.

- 2) Debate training session: an experienced debater would host a seminar on a particular debate related topic and followed by a practice session.
- 3) Round Table Discussion: where members are gathered to have round table discussion on topics related to debate, world events, moral ethics, philosophies, historical events, logical paradox, etc.
- 4) Invitational Debate: invite other universities' debate clubs to debate in UofT or in their own universities on a 'one on one' basis.
- 5) Debate tournament: organize both interuniversity and open invitational debate tournaments.
- 6) Group bonding activities: where the members of the club gather to do social events either locally or on out trips.

3. Membership

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

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

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.

U of T members are permitted to run, nominate, and vote in elections and constitutional amendments. The group is open to non-U of T members. However, these members do not hold the aforementioned rights. Members must register with a designated executive by submitting their full name and a valid email address.

The membership fee will be \$1.99 per year.

To maintain the status of member in good standing, a registered member must attend more than 50% of club events throughout the year, including both his/her associated department events and club events.

Any member of the club may apply for a refund within one (1) month of becoming a member. No refunds are permitted after the election periods.

4. Executive List and Duties

The executive committee shall be comprised of seven (5) elected officers. These include the President, the External VP, the Internal VP, the Treasurer, and the Debate Coach.

All voting positions on the Executive Committee shall be filled through an annual election. Only registered U of T students can be voting members and sit on the Executive team.

Executive Positions

The President shall:

- Oversee the operations, management and success of the group
- Be the spokesperson for the group
- Hold signing officer authority along with the Treasurer for financial purposes
- Preside overboard meetings as well as general meetings
- Ensure transition of office to the future Executives
- Make executive decisions in case of emergency, which are subject to review by the committee one month after the decision has taken effect

The Internal VP shall:

- Plan and organize club events, including but limited Internal Debate Tournaments, Open Invitational Debate Tournaments, and other club events that are open to the public for viewing and/or participating.
- Coordinate all executives in order to successfully organize and actually club events
- Ensure that all the activities of the club meet regulations and policies of the University of Toronto
- Coordinate organizational recruitment efforts

The External VP shall:

- Establish and maintain public relation with other clubs and organizations
- Seek for sponsorships
- Manage all social media accounts for the club.
- Produce and update social media accounts with relevant information regularly.
- Manage all advertising related issue, including making posters, flyers, campaign strategies for recruitment and etc.

The Treasurer shall:

- Record all financial transactions of the group
- Hold signing officer authority along with the President for financial purposes
- Maintain a budget of income and expenses along with receipts
- Advise members on financial position of the group
- Prepare an annual budget for the group as well as budgets for specific events
- Decide with the President where 50% of annual budget shall be spent on event related activities

The Debate Coach shall:

- Setting agenda for all debate related activities/training/event/tournament.
- Manage all proceedings and ensure the above agenda are executed successfully.
- Decides with the President where 50% of annual budget shall be spent on debate team related activities.

Director positions:

The group may appoint Directors or Coordinators for various committees such as social committee and so on; however, such positions do not hold executive decision-making authority.

The Head of Debate Team shall:

- Assist the Coach in all debate team related activities
- Assist all debate team members in personalized ways

The Event Director shall:

- Assist Internal VP Organize all internal club events and other club activities

The Public Relation Director shall:

- Assist External VP in seeking sponsorship and collaborating with other UofT clubs.

The Marketing Director shall:

- Assist the External VP in Manage all social media accounts for the club.
- Produce and update social media accounts with relevant information regularly.
- Manage all advertising related issue, including making posters, flayers, campaign strategies for recruitment and etc.

5. Termination of Executives or General Members:

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, may be given notice of removal.

The member up for removal shall have the right to defend his/her actions.

A two-thirds majority vote of the current members present in favor of removal is required.

The member will be removed from the club's membership and will lose any privileges associated with being a member of the club.

Executive members are subject to the same termination or impeachment process and, as determined by the vote, may lose their executive position along with their membership to the group.

6. Elections

The executive committee shall strike the Elections Committee and appoint one (1) Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and two (2) Scrutinizers from the general members on the committee to conduct and hold elections in March. All members of the Elections Committee shall be non-biased in the results of the election and shall be required to disclose any and all conflicts of interest in the election.

The CRO Returning Officer shall accept nominations only from group members that are also registered U of T members (staff, faculty, students and alumni) for candidacy of executive positions from the general membership before the beginning of March. Candidates have to be members in good standing and be part of the group for at least one month prior to the nomination period.

The CRO shall select three (3) election dates before March 30th for the voting period. These dates will be announced in a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to elections dates and must fall on weekdays.

The CRO and Scrutinizers shall provide each U of T member with a paper ballot on the voting dates and ask the member to place their ballot in an enclosed box.

In preparation for a tie, the CRO shall select an executive from amongst the executive committee, to cast their ballot and seal it in an envelope. In the event of a tie for an executive position, one of the two Scrutinizers shall break the seal and count the ballot in order to break the tie.

After the election is over, the CRO and Scrutinizers shall count the ballots. The candidate with the most votes shall be elected to the position. The CRO and Scrutinizers shall submit a report of the results of the elections to the Executive Committee and general members.

Registered U of T members may not vote by proxy. Non-U of T members may not nominate or vote in elections.

Only U of T members who have paid any applicable membership fees and have been a member in good standing for 30 days prior to election dates are eligible for voting.

Term of executive positions shall be from May 1st to April 30th.

7. Finances

The Treasurer shall keep records of all income and expenses. The Treasurer shall present the group's financial health at the annual general meetings.

Club expenses shall be restricted to providing goods and services to its members for club related activities.

The group's executive or members may not engage in activities that are essentially commercial in nature. This is not intended to preclude the collection of membership fees to cover the expenses of the group, or of charges for specific activities, programs or events, or to prohibit groups from engaging in legitimate fundraising. However, the group will not have as a major activity a function that makes it an on-campus part of a commercial organization, will not provide services and goods at a profit when that profit is used for purposes other than those of the organization, and will not pay salaries to some or all of its officers.

8. Meetings

A) Annual General Meetings (AGMs):

The group shall hold general meetings at least twice per year, i.e. once per academic term.

The Executive Committee will announce these dates two (2) weeks prior to holding the meetings. These meetings are intended to go over the group's annual activity plan, financial health and propose or vote on constitutional amendments, if any. Motions will require 2/3 majority of registered members in attendance for a vote to be cast. The motion with the most votes will be passed.

b) Executive Meetings:

The executive committee shall meet on a monthly basis where date and times are to be set by an executive. The quorum of executive meetings shall be 50%+1 of executives.

9. Amendments

Any registered U of T members may propose and vote on amendments to this constitution. The Executive Committee will administer the process of having amendments discussed at general meetings.

Constitutional amendments shall require a 2/3 majority to be passed at Annual General Meetings by registered U of T members in attendance.

The Executive Committee shall formally adopt the new constitution and submit the revised constitution to the respective University offices (i.e. The Office of Student Life, The University of Toronto Students' Union, etc) within two (2) weeks of its approval by general members.