

The PEARS Project Constitution

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I. Name

The following constitution shall act as the governing document for the Executive branch of The Prevention Empowerment, Advocacy, Response, for Survivors Project, hereafter referred to as The PEARS Project.

II. Mandate and Goals

The PEARS Project is a grassroots, trauma-informed coalition that provides support and resources to survivors of sexual violence across the University of Toronto. Founded and led by survivors through survivor-centred principles such as autonomy, consent, equity, mutual aid, support, and care. PEARS recognizes survivors as leaders and the voices which need to be heard to implement policy change. The tri-campus initiative consists of ten teams of peer supporters (one at each St. George campus college; one at each satellite campus, and one within Engineering).

By formalizing a community and resource network that is by and for survivors we can better support one another and increase access to legal, mental health, and capacity-building supports. Furthermore, by integrating PEARS 'nodes'/teams into pre-existing communities, PEARS will be better able to create mutual relationships with broader student communities and help promote the work of other divisional stakeholders.

The goals of The PEARS Project are as follows:

- A. Create and train a team that will work within The University of Toronto to provide one-on-one peer support.
- B. Support and empower survivors by connecting them to resources, including forms of material, physical, and mental aid.
- C. Advocate for the care and support of survivors.
- D. Promote anti-oppressive, anti-colonial, survivor-centric, consent-based values.
- E. Ensure that survivors' voices are heard
- F. Promote a culture of consent and address the challenges survivors face within the University of Toronto as part of a broader anti-gender based violence

- movement working towards addressing systemic rape culture on post-secondary campuses.
- G. Create funds and other opportunities for survivors to access needed resources.
 - H. Create safer spaces and promote a culture of consent within the University of Toronto.
 - I. Provide peer support and additional gender based violence training for any and all members and branches of The PEARS Project.

III. Division of Powers

The governing powers of The PEARS Project executive branch shall be divided into Directorial and Executive bodies.

The Directorial and Executive Branches are held responsible to the Board of Directors.

The Directorial branch consists of either a Single Director or Two Co-Directors. The duties of the director(s) are as follows:

- 1.1. Chairing PEARS meetings or assigning members of the executive to chair meetings.
- 1.2. Assigning tasks to the executive and members, and following up on their completion.
- 1.3. Overseeing peer support programming and training for peer supporters.
- 1.4. Mediating disputes between members and following up on those disputes with first-stage disciplinary measures (see Act VIII. Dispute Resolution and Disciplinary Measures) if necessary.
- 1.5. Maintaining the general order of the club and supporting its members.
- 1.6. Personally representing the PEARS mandate within their respective communities.

All directoral positions are expected and empowered to fulfil the above-mentioned responsibilities. Co-Directors are expected to present a unified vision.

The Executive branch consists of members holding executive positions other than the position of Director(s) (when referenced together: the executive) and is responsible for the following:

- 1.7. Fulfilling specialized tasks as outlined in each executive position's definition.
- 1.8. Fostering member engagement and enabling the participation of other members.
- 1.9. Attending all PEARS meetings when able to.

- 1.10. Voting on matters pertaining to PEARS activities and governance.
- 1.11. Personally representing the PEARS mandate within their respective communities.
- 1.12. Receiving peer support training and, should they so choose, providing peer support.

IV. Leave of Absence & Temporary Replacement Pathways

PEARS is committed to replacing hegemonic and punitive systems with support systems that respond to inactivity of Executives.

If an Executive is temporarily unable to fulfil their duties — whether that be due to family, mental, or academic crises — they should notify the Director(s) as soon as possible. This message need only invoke Section IV of the Constitution, no other details need to be provided, and privacy will be respected.

If an Executive invokes Section IV of the Constitution, indicating they are taking a leave of absence, the following mechanisms will be triggered:

- 1.1. If Section IV is invoked by the Secretary
 - 1.1.1. The Director(s) takes on the workload of the Secretary
- 1.2. If Section IV is invoked by the Treasurer
 - 1.2.1. The Director(s) will take on the workload of the Treasurer
 - 1.2.2. If the Director(s) cannot take on the workload of the Treasurer, an Executive Assistant will act as interim Treasurer
 - 1.2.3. If the Director(s) and all Executive Assistant's are unable to take on the workload of the Treasurer, the Secretary will act as interim Treasurer
- 1.3. If Section IV is invoked by any other member of the executive
 - 1.3.1. The Director(s) have discretion regarding action taken when another member of the executive takes a temporary leave of absence, options include the following:
 - 1.3.1.1. The Director(s) may take on the workload of the member.
 - 1.3.1.2. The Director(s) may put out a call within the executive for support in the interim.
 - 1.3.1.3. The Director(s) may assign an Executive Assistant to the role in the interim.
 - 1.3.1.4. The Director(s) may pause work on special projects until such a time as the member may return from leave.
 - 1.3.1.5. The Director(s) may take any other action they deem reasonable and proportional.

V. Appointment of Director(s)

1. The Directoral branch of PEARS will consist of either a single Director or two Co-Directors. Those roles are to be filled by existing or previous members of The PEARS Project.
2. The Director(s) will be appointed through a two step process. The first step is a written application which will be reviewed by the hiring committee. Selected applicants will then proceed to the second round of hiring; participating in an interview conducted by the aforementioned hiring committee. From this process, the hiring committee will choose either one single individual or two individuals to serve as Director or Co-Directors, respectively.
 - 2.1. The hiring committee will be formed from existing PEARS Members, and will include five or six individuals.
 - 2.1.1. These five or six individuals should include: two members of the Board of Directors, two members of the outgoing executive (excluding any members who have applied for the director position), and the outgoing Director or Co-Directors of The PEARS Project.
3. PEARS must always have a Director. Should a Director resign without a Co-Director they will promptly call an election and continue their term until another Director is elected from members of the existing executive. Should a Director be removed by the executive or be otherwise unable to continue their term, that responsibility will fall to the Board of Directors in the interim. Under these circumstances, a new hiring process must commence within three (3) weeks.
 - 3.1. This internal hiring process will serve to appoint one existing member of the PEARS Project to serve as the Director of The PEARS Project. All current members of The PEARS Project who have received peer support training are eligible to apply.
 - 3.1.1. The new Director will be appointed through a two step process. The first step is a written application which will be reviewed by the hiring committee. Selected applicants will then proceed to the second round of hiring; participating in an interview conducted by the aforementioned hiring committee. From this process, the hiring committee will choose either one single individual to serve as the new Director for the remainder of the term.
 - 3.1.1.1. The hiring committee will be made up of the existing executive, excluding the outgoing Director.

VI. Executive Hiring

1. The positions which constitute the PEARS Executive branch must include a Secretary, Treasurer, Branch Coordinator, and Equity & Accessibility Coordinator.
2. The Director(s) is responsible for the allocation of any other executive positions, including any and all Special Project roles. They are also responsible for providing role descriptions and expectations surrounding time commitments for said positions.
 - 2.1. Those positions may include but are not limited to: Events Coordinator, Social Media Director, Communication & Outreach Director, Arts & Advocacy Project Lead, Policy Project Lead, Housing Project Lead, Executive Assistant.
3. Incoming Directors hold the responsibility of hiring a team of executives once per calendar year. Hiring should be open to all University of Toronto students.
 - 3.1. The Executive will be appointed through an application process. A written application is to be submitted by each applicant and reviewed by the Director(s). Based on these applications, the Director(s) may choose to hire applicants directly, or they may choose to interview applicants. This decision is up to the discretion of the Director(s), however complaints may be brought to the Board of Directors.
4. The Director(s) must release an application for any newly created or newly vacated position. After the application has been made publicly available for at least seventy-two (72) hours then the Director(s) may call a vote for the next meeting. All existing members of the Executive may vote, and the candidate who achieves the most votes will succeed to their position. The existing executive will review anonymized candidate applications. Only the existing Director(s) may review applications with identifying details. Positions will be voted on in sequence. Votes will be cast anonymously. Candidates who succeed in two (2) positions may be asked to forfeit one (1) of them. Members must abstain from voting on positions for which they are running. Victorious candidates will succeed in their positions two (2) weeks after their election.
5. In the event of a tie in a contest for any position the following procedure must be followed to ensure resolution:
 - 5.1. All candidates who received fewer votes are removed from the contest.
 - 5.2. The candidates must confer within the next forty-eight (48) hours and come to an alternative solution which they are all comfortable enacting. They may request mediation from the current Director(s) or the Secretary.
 - 5.3. Once the candidates have conferred, the executive will have a meeting without the candidates in attendance. The executive will be informed as to whether or not a compromise has been reached by the candidates. They may request to be

informed as to what that compromise is. The executive then discusses possible solutions and holds a second vote. If the vote succeeds, then the candidates are invited to return to the meeting and presented with the solution. If the vote fails then the candidates return and present their compromise if they reached one and it was not the solution already voted on. The executive votes on this new solution. If it passes then the solution is enacted. If it fails, and the position is neither Secretary nor Treasurer, then the executive including the candidates vote on whether it is a critical position. Secretary and Treasurer are automatically considered critical positions. If the position is critical, then the Director may offer it to any member of the club they choose. This offer must take place within seventy-two (72) hours. If the position is not critical, then it remains unfilled.

6. The President or Co-Presidents can create new positions and modify existing ones (with the consent of their occupants). These can be done without the formal approval of the executive members through a vote. It is a Directorial responsibility in this case to ensure that the position is not being created against the general will of the executive members. The Secretary is responsible for keeping a list of these positions, their status, their occupants, and their duties.

VII. Meetings

1. Executive meetings will be held once a week throughout the duration of the academic term, except for the weeks when club-wide meetings will be occurring. Executive members are required to attend executive meetings, unless they provide a valid excuse. The executives may choose not to meet during exam periods, reading weeks, and respective holidays.
2. PEARS wide meetings will occur every month. Executive members are required to attend PEARS-wide meetings, unless they provide a valid excuse. Any and all members of the branches of The PEARS Project are included in these meetings, but attendance is not mandatory.
 - 2.1. Each branch must provide an update at each PEARS-wide meeting. Should no member be able to attend, the head of that branch should communicate an update to the Executive prior to the meeting.
3. The Director or Co-Directors will be responsible for chairing all executive and club-wide meetings. Should the single Director or both Co-Directors be absent, meetings will be cancelled. Should only one of two Co-Directors be present, the meeting will continue.
4. The Secretary is responsible for taking minutes, and tracking attendance for all executive and club-wide meetings. The Secretary is responsible for making meeting minutes available to the Executive. Should the Secretary be absent, Branch Coordinator may take on the aforementioned responsibilities. Should the Secretary

and the Branch Coordinator be absent, an Executive Assistant may take on the aforementioned responsibilities.

VIII. Finance

1. The Treasurer must present the semesterly budget to The PEARS Project Executive Branch to be approved. This must be in advance of the UTSU budget application deadline for the relevant semester.
 - 1.1. If the budget receives unanimous approval from the executives, it will be submitted to the Board of Directors by The Director(s).
 - 1.2. The Director(s) shall present The PEARS Project budget to the Board of Director at a budget approval meeting. If lines in the budget are not approved by the Board of Directors, they must be brought back to the executives for review and then re-submitted to the Board of Directors.
 - 1.3. When a budget is approved by the Board of Directors, The Director(s) will then submit to the UTSU for approval.
2. Any additional budget lines during the year must be approved unanimously by the executives and submitted by the Treasurer to the Board of Directors.
3. Any reallocation within existing budget lines during the year must be approved unanimously by the executives and communicated by the Treasurer to the Board of Directors.
4. Purchase responsibilities are distributed among the executives and are assigned by the Treasurer with the help of the Director(s).
5. Any executive who makes a purchase must keep and manage receipts and other proofs of purchase to be submitted to the Treasurer and used as reference for reimbursements. Reimbursement will not be approved without a receipt. The Treasurer is responsible for reimbursing executive members who purchased budget items.

IX. Dispute Resolution, Disciplinary Measures, and Accountability

1. In the case of a dispute between members, the involved parties are expected to first resolve it amongst themselves. If the members are unsuccessful in resolving their dispute they are expected to ask the Director(s) for assistance in finding a resolution. Other members may be brought in if the Director(s) is an involved party in the dispute, and the conflict may be brought to the Board of Directors.

The Presidents are not responsible for resolving disputes which are unrelated to The PEARS Project, and members are responsible for neither engaging in such disputes during The PEARS Project events or meetings nor letting such disputes impede their ability to serve the club.

Members holding executive positions who fail to fulfil the duties outlined for their positions may be subject to forfeiting those positions at the request of the Director(s). The Director(s) may also take alternative measures such as asking the individual to switch positions with another member, etc. Members who fail to comply or follow the

resolution recommended by the Director(s) will have their eligibility for their position voted on by the executive at the next executive meeting.

2. Any member of The PEARS Project can have their membership status revoked if they are found to have committed any of the following either online or in person:
 - 2.1. Assault (sexual, physical, verbal, or otherwise).
 - 2.2. Failing to maintain confidentiality upon receiving a disclosure.
 - 2.3. Bullying, hate speech (racism, sexism, slurs or otherwise), or shaming (body shaming, “slut shaming”, or otherwise).
 - 2.4. Sharing club or member information which is of a sensitive or confidential nature.
 - 2.5. Violating the PEARS Project constitution in a flagrant and intentional manner.

If a member is suspected of having violated any of the previous tenets outlined in the PEARS Project constitution (Section IX, Clause 2), then it is the responsibility of their fellow members to bring it to the attention of the Director(s). The following courses of action may then occur:

- 2.6. If the Director(s) determine that the suspected member has violated these tenets set out in the PEARS Project constitution then they may privately ask the member to resign. This may be cited as a first-stage disciplinary action. All further actions are second-stage disciplinary actions. The reason for resignation can remain confidential and no details need to be shared with the PEARS Executive team regarding the accused members' departure.
- 2.7. If the member wishes to contest the Director(s) request instead of resigning voluntarily, then they may bring it to the executive. In this situation, the entire executive would be informed of the accusations levelled against the member by the Director(s). The Director(s) will provide only the details necessary in order to make the case against the member. The member will be given time to make a speech in their defence. Executives will then be allowed to ask questions or provide further information which they may deem necessary in making a decision. When the executive is satisfied then the member will have the opportunity to make one final defence. Finally, the executive will vote anonymously, with a majority (51%) in favour resulting in the member's expulsion from the PEARS Project.
- 2.8. If the Director(s) are the subject of such a suspicion, then members may bring their concerns to the Board of Directors who must schedule a meeting within one week which will follow the same stipulations outlined in clause 10.1 with the exception that the Board of Directors will take on the role of the

Director(s) for the duration of the meeting. The vote will be considered a vote of confidence, with the exception that it will be held anonymously. If the vote passes and only one of the Co-Directors was subject to removal, then a vote of confidence may be held concerning the other Co-Director.

- 2.9. If the Director(s) do not determine that the suspected member has violated the tenets set out in the PEARS Project constitution yet the member who brought it to their attention disagrees, then that member may bring their case to the Board of Directors, who may handle or choose to escalate the situation.

Confidence votes can be held to remove or affirm support for an existing Director(s). They can be targeted toward one or both Co-Directors, or the single director. There are three (3) possible instances in which a confidence vote may be called:

- 2.10. A confidence vote brought to the floor in the instances outlined in clauses 10.3 and 10.4 will require a majority (51%) vote to remove any member of the Directorial branch and only the executive may cast ballots
- 2.11. A director seeking a renewed mandate may call for a confidence vote which requires a majority (51%) in favour to continue their term and all members may cast ballots.
- 2.12. A confidence vote called at any other time will require either at least two-thirds (2/3) of members voting in favour of removal or a majority (51%) in favour of removal with at least four-fifths (80%) of members present in order to remove a Director. All members may cast ballots in this instance.

Confidence votes cannot be cast anonymously, however, the target of the confidence vote must leave the room during the time in which final discussion and voting is taking place.

Should a Director fail a confidence vote they will lose Directorial and executive status. The process for replacement must be initiated and follow the procedures outlined in section V (Appointment of Directors).

X. Amendments

1. When a constitutional amendment is brought to The PEARS Project, it shall require passage at two (2) consecutive meetings, held at least one (1) week apart, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority at each meeting. All members must be notified of the proposed changes after the first of these meetings.

2. Administrative amendments need not be voted on should the Director(s) deem them necessary. The Director(s) may use their discretion, however a member may bring issues regarding these decisions to the Board of Directors.

XI. Ratification

In order for The PEARS Project constitution to be ratified, it will be presented to the existing PEARS executive as of this day: September 29th, 2023.

Each clause will be read aloud by the author, after which the executive may vote to confirm the clause, amend it, or strike it. Members may then propose clauses to be added which will also be voted on. Each of these votes will require a majority (51%) to pass.

Finally, the executive will vote to ratify The Prevention Empowerment, Advocacy, Response, for Survivors Project Act of the Constitution, which will require at least two-thirds (2/3) in favour in order to pass.