

# The Constitution of the Iranian Students' Association at the University of Toronto (UTIRAN)

## **Article 1: Name and Purpose**

1. The name of the group is Iranian Students' Association at the University of Toronto, abbreviated as UTIRAN.
2. UTIRAN is an independent cultural, academic, and social organization that seeks to promote activities relating to Iranians and Iranian-Canadians at the University of Toronto.
3. UTIRAN is dedicated to the promotion of diversity and inclusion among its members (*further described in Article 2: The Statement of Equity*).
4. UTIRAN aims to promulgate the Iranian and Iranian-Canadian cultural heritage, provide an appropriate channel of communication and dialogue for the Iranian student community, promote interaction amongst its members, and provide academic assistance.
5. UTIRAN shall be non-partisan and non-religious. As such, it will not advocate the interest of any political and/or religious party, group, individual, etc. (*further described in Article 3: The Statement of Non-Partisanship*).
6. UTIRAN shall be non-profit. As such, it will not engage in activities that are commercial in nature. This is not to preclude UTIRAN from organizing specific activities at a reasonable charge. However, UTIRAN will not function as an on-campus branch of a commercial organization, provide services for personal monetary profit for third party organizations, or pay salaries to any of its officers.

## **Article 2: The Statement of Equity**

### **Aims:**

1. To elucidate UTIRAN's mission statement regarding cultural, racial, age, and sexual diversity and inclusion.
2. To provide practical guidelines for UTIRAN to cherish diversity and inclusion values among its members.
3. To provide necessary means for UTIRAN to protect its members from any discriminatory acts that might violate these values.

### **Key terms:**

- Member(s) refer to anyone who has registered as one and is recognized to be one by UTIRAN (*further described in Article 4: The Membership*).
- BoD refers to the governing board of directors which is comprised of elected and appointed UTIRAN members (*further described in Article 3: The Board of Directors*).
- Race refers to any cultural identity to which a person subscribes. A racial group may

reside within Iranian or Canadian communities.

- Sexual group(s) refers to anyone who identifies as straight heterosexual or a member of the LGBTQQIP2SAA groups. Sexual identities encompass all representations of sexual and gender representations.
- LGBTQQIP2SAA refers to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, two-spirited, androgynous, or asexual.
- Discrimination refers to acts in any form or shape, be it verbal, physical, sexual, or in writing, be it on social media or outside, that violate the values of diversity and inclusion.
- Victim(s) refers to anyone, be it a UTIRAN member or not, who is affected in any shape or form by an act of discrimination during a recognized UTIRAN activity.
- Perpetrator(s) refers to anyone, be it a UTIRAN member or not, who is believed to have committed the act of discrimination against the victim(s).
- Case(s) of dispute refers to a challenge merited based on discrimination that can be brought up to the UTIRAN BoD by the victim(s) or anyone on their behalf.

#### **The statement:**

UTIRAN abides by the values of diversity and inclusion of all racial, age, cultural, sex and gender groups. This entails that UTIRAN must act to ensure inclusion of all groups and promote a diverse representation of all groups in different activities.

#### **Cases of dispute:**

A case of dispute may be brought up to UTIRAN BoD by a victim(s) or a person on behalf of the victim(s). **Once a case is reported, the UTIRAN BoD must hold a session within a month of the report to address the case.** In this session, BoD may request to hear from the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s). The final decision on the case may result in the removal of the perpetrator as a UTIRAN member (*further described in Article 5: Termination of BoDs or General Members*).

### **Article 3: The Statement of Non-Partisanship**

#### **Key terms:**

- Political activity refers to any activity that is in line with a recognized political camp.
- Partisan activity refers to any activity that aims to side with a recognized political party, be it in Iran or in Canada.
- Activity refers to actions such as, but not limited to, gathering, rally, holdings, announcements, endorsements, advertisements, be it on social media or elsewhere, be it in writing or verbal.

#### **The statement:**

UTIRAN abides to never participate or promote in any shape and form in any political or partisan activity. UTIRAN acknowledges that albeit the importance of these activities, it is not equipped with the instruments, agenda, or the vision to execute or participate in these activities.

## **Article 4: Membership**

Membership of the group is open to the University of Toronto students, staff, faculty and alumni. Voting members are permitted to run, nominate, and vote in elections and constitutional amendments. The group is open to non-U of T individuals, but they do not hold the aforementioned rights.

- Voting membership is open only to currently registered students of the University of Toronto.
  - Non-voting membership is open to staff, faculty, and alumni of the University of Toronto.
1. To become a member, one should submit their full name and U of T email address via the club's membership form.
  2. Membership will be granted with a membership fee of at most \$5 per year. Any member may apply for a refund within one month of becoming a member.
  3. Voting members elect BoD via the election process (*further explained in Article 8: Elections*).

*Elections*).

## **Article 5: Board of Directors (BoD)**

The Board of Directors (BoD) is the executive body of UTIRAN. BoD is in charge of operating the day to day functions of the club. BoD consists of seven members that are elected in an annual general meeting (*elections are further described in Article 8: Elections*). These members are elected for different non-overlapping roles, are expected to be leaders in their roles, and are expected to set high standards for the rest of the members. Candidates for these roles must present evidence of exemplary interest and experience. The BoD roles consist of: President, VP Finance, VP Membership, VP Public Relations, VP Technology and Design, VP Events Operation, Secretary. Board of Directors members serve their positions from June after election through May of the following year.

### **President**

- Supports the work of VPs; secures funding and grants for the work of the club
- Secures affiliation of the club with student bodies such as Ulife and UTSU ● Facilitates BoD meetings
- Works with VP Finance to support financial affairs of the club
- Works with VP HR to recruit and increase engagement
- Works with VP PR to promote the image of the club
- Works with VP Tech and Design to create the necessary tools for the club
- Works with VP Events Operations to support the execution of the events in the club

**VP Finance** (department needs 2-3 members)

- Operates the daily financial affairs of the club (financial reports, reimbursements, fund and account management)

**VP Membership** (department needs 3-4 members)

- Supports the work of members, volunteers, and the affiliates of the club
- Outreach: recruits volunteers and members

**VP Public Relations** (department needs 2-3 members)

- Promotes the club to outside bodies
- Social media relations
- External collaborations with other organizations and student-bodies

**VP Technology and Design** (department needs 3-4 members)

- Creates and maintains the tools necessary for the club
- Designs graphics and posters
- Maintains the website

**VP Events Operations** (department needs 2-3 members)

- Supports the operations of different events held in the club or co-sponsored by the club
- Works closely with event leaders and operating teams
- Trains event leaders for the execution of different events

**Secretary**

- Facilitates communication between different departments
- Organizes meetings and takes meeting minutes
- Books rooms (ex. ACE and Hart House) for different events or BoD meetings

Each VP selects the members of their departments from volunteers, members, outside resources. These members comprise the appointed executive body of the BoD.

**Appointed executive members (AEMs)**

AEMs act as the adjunct body of BoD to support different departmental roles of the BoD. They are selected by the VP of each department. They serve the functions of each department. Each departmental VP holds regular meetings with AEMs of that department and reports the minutes back to the BoD. AEMs may be volunteers or members of the club.

## **Removal of an AEM**

A motion to remove an AEM member must be brought up to the BoD by each VP. AEM members may be removed by a decision made by the BoD and an opportunity must be given to the AEM to work in other departments. An AEM may resign from their duties at any time without the need for any due process.

## **Decision making and meetings in BoD**

- BoDs shall meet on at least a monthly basis.
- At each meeting, VPs may present the minutes from their departmental meetings with AEMs.
- The ultimate source of decisions regarding the daily functions of the club is the BoD consisting of seven members. As such, the decisions made at departmental AEM meetings serve as a strong recommendation for a certain course of action.
- To reach a majority on any matter, at least four votes are needed.
- On occasions and at the discretion of the BoD, AEMs can be called to be consulted on specific topics. The final vote is reserved for the BoD members.

## **Article 6: Termination of General Members or BoDs**

### **General Members**

Any member of the club who commits an act that negatively affects the interests of the club and its members, including non-disclosure of a significant conflict of interest or violating the statement of equity, may be given the notice of removal. A case of dispute may be brought up to UTIRAN BoD by a victim(s) or a person on behalf of the victim(s).

Once a case is reported, the UTIRAN BoD must hold a session within a month of the report to address the case. The member up for removal shall have the opportunity to defend their actions. A two-thirds majority vote of the present BoD members is required to pass the motion. The member must be given the right to appeal before the club members, and the minor majority (>50%) vote of the club members will have the final say on the matter. The member will be removed from the club's membership and will lose any privileges associated with being a member of the club.

### **BoDs**

UTIRAN recognizes that a BoD membership is a privilege granted by the vote and trust of the club members. Any member of BoD may be removed if their performance is deemed unsatisfactory, disruptive, discriminatory, or insulting. The statement of equity can be used to remove a BoD member. Furthermore, failure to execute the full duties of a role can be used as grounds for the removal of a BoD member.

To initiate the process of removal of a BoD member, a motion to remove the member must be brought up to the board. The motion is to be communicated with the addressed member and a

special BoD meeting is to be held to hear the appeal of the addressed member. A 2/3rd vote of the BoD members is required to pass the motion. Upon further appeal of the addressed BoD member, the final decision is to be made on the basis of a minor majority (>50%) of all the club members. If the motion is passed, the BoD must call a by-election to replace the emptied role.

A BoD member may resign from the duties after communicating their decision to the BoD. The BoD then must call a by-election to replace the emptied role.

### **Article 7: General Meetings**

1. For every general election or vote on constitutional amendments, a general meeting should be called by the BoD.
2. A minimum of one general meeting shall be held every year no later than May 31st, in which the BoD for the next term will be elected.
3. A general meeting will be held under the following conditions: i. if not held for at least a year ii. At the request of twenty percent (20%) of the members. iii. at the discretion of the BoD.
4. The BoD will announce the meeting dates at least two weeks prior to holding the meeting.
5. General 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.

Key terms:

- General election refers to an election in which all 7 BoD are elected by the voting members for the next term.

### **Article 8: Elections**

UTIRAN recognizes democratic elections as the only legitimate way to assemble a BoD or make changes to the constitution.

1. The only eligible participants in an election are UTIRAN voting members.
2. The BoD is in charge of assigning an election committee and executing the election process. BoD must ensure that the election process is conducted in an unbiased and fair manner.
3. The election committee comprises one Chief Returning Officer (CRO) plus enough BoD members to accomplish all the tasks. CRO is a trustee who is not a member of the BoD and AEM. CRO has the authority to oversee an election and certify the results. CRO should not be a candidate in the election which they oversee.
4. Voting for elections or referendums may take place in-person or online. The decision on the platform of the election is to be made by the election committee. The election committee is in charge of finalizing the voters' list.

5. The quorum for each election is 50% of the current voting members or thirty voting members, whichever is the least.
6. General elections for the appointment of a BoD must be held by May 31st each year, with the new BoD starting on the following June.
7. Nominations for an election must be open at least two weeks prior to an election day. The election committee shall close the nomination no earlier than four days prior to election day.
8. Annual General Meetings (AGMs) must be held for each general election to allow the candidates to give their electoral pitches.

#### **Article 9: Amendments to the constitution**

1. Any voting member may propose amendments to this constitution. The BoD will administer the process of having amendments discussed at a general meeting.
2. A vote of super-majority of two-third of the voting members at a general meeting is required for an amendment to pass.
3. The BoD shall formally adopt the new constitution and submit the revised constitution to the respective University offices within two weeks of its approval by general voting members.