

# Constitution of “Association for Growth and Peer Experiences”

## 1. Name

The official name of this recognized campus group is “Association for Growth and Peer Experiences”

The acronym or abbreviation of this group is: AGAPĒ

## 2. Purpose and Objectives

This club intends to highlight students who struggle to find friendship on campus through other avenues and events, be it due to their packed schedules, long commutes or simply because their social batteries don’t allow it. We aim to be flexible and low-commitment, allowing students to break through these barriers with the help of their peers and create lasting connections on campus.

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

**Mission:** To create a space where people can tend to their physical, mental and emotional health on their own terms, with a community of their own peers.

To assist in bridging the gaps within the UTM community and adapt to the needs of those who may not be able to participate meaningfully in existing programming.

To host frequent, varied and recurring events that focus on community building as an avenue to improve wellbeing and are flexible enough to cater to every type of schedule so members can build their own communities without constraint.

**Vision:** We believe that an important aspect to helping students navigate their own mental health struggles is a kind, strong and sound community of their peers to support them, rather than solely relying on official but limited resources. After going through our own journeys in academia, though, we also understand that building this community might be one of the hardest parts of university life. We want to give every student who feels isolated in their own lives another chance to grow with other members of the student body who feel the same way. We want to encourage building friendships and push our members to flourish in their own wellbeing journeys.

**Goals:** The main goal of this club is to create an inclusive community on campus where every student has someone to turn to when they need help, and to help those who are struggling to build connections on campus. We aim to do this by organizing a variety of regular group events that are oriented towards fostering a consistent environment to promote community building, all while supporting the mental health and wellness of both general members and executives alike.

**Direction of your group:** This group will focus on walking students who have not yet had an opportunity to find friendships through the steps of creating meaningful connections with their peers and building their own communities through a variety of social-centered activities. Such activities can include gaming days, crafting workshops and book clubs, or even talks from mental health professionals, nature walks and picnics. Activities will be decided by both executives and general membership, to ensure that all interests are well-represented. In these environments, students will be able to grow their own social circles with peers that share common interests and enthusiasms.

### 3. Membership

Membership to the group is open to all the University of Toronto members (students, staff, faculty and alumni).

UTMSU 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 **\$0 per year**.

Any member of the club may apply for a refund within one (1) month of becoming a member. No refunds are permitted 30 days after the election periods.

For recognition by the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (UTMSU), the group must maintain a minimum of 25 members, a total of 51% of membership are UTMSU members. The group must also maintain recognition from the Centre for Student Engagement. These requirements are subject to change and should be checked with UTMSU annually to ensure qualifications are met.

### 4. Executive List and Duties

The executive committee shall be composed of **TEN (10)** elected officers. These include: **President (1), Internal Vice-President (1), External Vice-President (1), Secretary (1), Finance Officer (1), Internal Events Coordinator (1), External Events Coordinator (1), Membership Coordinator (1), Communications Coordinator (1), Marketing Coordinator (1)**

#### *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 Finance Officer for financial purposes
- Preside over board meetings as well as general meetings
- Assume duties of the External Vice-President in their absence
- Oversee the jobs and tasks of the Internal Events Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, Communications Officer, and Marketing Officer
- Ensure that all the activities of the club meet regulations and policies of the University of Toronto
- Ensure transition of office for the future Executives
- Be the primary contact when reaching out to the club
- Attend club events when possible

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

- Assume duties of the President in their absence
- Be the secondary contact when reaching out to the club,
- Oversees internal matters such as events and club membership,
- Evaluates the performance of events,
- Works closely with the Secretary, Internal Event Coordinator, and Membership Coordinator to ensure internal operations run smoothly
- Attend club events when possible

*The External Vice-President shall:*

- Assume duties of the Internal Vice-President in their absence
- Assume duties of the President in the absence of a replacement
- Oversee the job and tasks of the External Events Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, Communications Officer, and Marketing Officer
- Coordinate organizational recruitment efforts
- Coordinate outreach efforts for events collaborations, and other applicable activities
- Be the tertiary contact when reaching out to the club
- Attend club events when possible

*The Secretary shall:*

- Assume duties of the President in the absence of a replacement
- Make and organize a list of all registered members
- Notify all members of meetings
- Record notes and motions for meetings
- Shall be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of activities, events, tasks, and decisions of the club
- Attend club events when possible

*The Finance Officer 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 the financial position of the group
- Prepare an annual budget for the group as well as budgets for specific events
- Submit biannual audits to the UTMSU
- Issue reimbursements for transactions where the club banking account was not used
- Actively search for grant and funding opportunities for the club
- Attend club events when possible

*The Internal Events Coordinator shall:*

- Be responsible for generating, planning, scheduling, booking, and execution of events held exclusively by the club
- Collaborate with fellow executives for the generating, planning, and scheduling of events
- Be responsible for booking rooms for events hosted exclusively by the club
- Be responsible for catering orders for events hosted exclusively by the club
- Attend club events when possible

*The External Events Coordinator shall:*

- Be responsible for generating, planning, scheduling, booking, and execution of events in collaboration with other clubs, societies, levy groups, or any applicable groups or individuals.
- Collaborate with fellow executives, and reach out to other clubs in the event of potential collaboration.
- Be responsible for ensuring that rooms are booked for collaboration events
- Be responsible for ensuring, when applicable, that catering is booked for collaboration events
- Attend club events when possible

*The Membership Coordinator shall:*

- Handle introducing new members into the club
- Recruit new members into the club
- Retain membership within the club
- Coordinate with members on club events, club collaborations, and other activities that the membership may be interested in
- Bring up general membership concerns to the executive membership
- Manage conflict within the membership, where applicable
- Attend club events when possible

*The Communications Officer shall:*

- Handle official correspondence of the organization
- The Communications Officer will be another steward of the email account.
- The Communications Officer will control the social media accounts for the club, including but not limited to the club's Discord server, Instagram, etc. in terms of communication with students, faculty, other organizations
- The Communications Officer will be responsible for publishing appropriate announcements to these accounts regarding club affairs such as General Meetings, events, and other relevant affairs.
- Be the quaternary contact when reaching out to the club
- Attend club events when possible

*The Marketing Officer shall:*

- Be responsible for promoting events wherein the club is involved in. Including but not limited to:
  - Posting flyers
  - Social Media Promotions
  - Outreach to other clubs, societies, or levy groups to promote the event
  - Emailing the general membership about events
- Generate ideas on how to promote club events
- Attend club events when possible

**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 eligible for the process of removal as outlined below..

- The process to terminate general members is as follows;
  - The executive team will issue warnings to the offending members; two (2) verbal warnings and one (1) written warning will be issued. The warnings must clearly state the problem(s) and the steps to be taken to resolve them.
  - After such a warning, if failed to oblige, the executives can proceed to hold a vote within the executive team to remove the member from the club. The results of the vote should be two-thirds in favour of removal.
    - In addition to the above guidelines, the UTMSU reserves the right to intervene as a mediator due to their independence and objectivity in the matter. The VP Campus Life has the right to ensure the procedures were followed accordingly.

- The member must have the right to request an appeal before the general membership, and the majority vote of the general membership will have the final say on the matter.
  - Upon the final decision, the offending member may request to write a statement in defense, the results of which will be made public to the club's general membership as part of a meeting called by the executive team specifically for this purpose.
  - Upon receiving this information, the general membership in attendance will be held to a vote, so they may be entitled to a final say in the decision. If the results of the vote are two-thirds in favour of removal, the offending member will be excommunicated from the club.
- Once finalized, the offending member will be removed from the club's membership and will lose any privileges associated with being a member of the club. The UTMSU will then be made aware of the changes to the club membership.

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. The removal process is similar, with the addition of an appointment/by-election.

- Additional steps for the termination of an executive member is as follows;
  - After the termination of an executive member, their position will be open for those who wish to run for an executive position.
  - A Chief Returning Officer (CRO) must be appointed to supervise the elections. The CRO must be an unbiased third party to the election, and must be approved by the outgoing executives and the Campus Groups Coordinator. The CRO must not be running for a position on the incoming executive team.
    - Additional policies are laid out in the "Election Policies" subheading, under elections (section five).

Alternatively, an executive member may be removed from office by the club itself for failing to perform their duties as defined by the club constitution and by-laws, such removal will occur if, and only if, the following conditions are satisfied:

- A request is submitted to the VP Campus Life which should:
  - Be signed by at least 30% of the Club membership or two-thirds (2/3) of the club executive membership
  - Specify the alleged incidents of neglect of duty
    - Upon receipt of the request, the council shall be required to hold a referendum within twenty (20) days.

## 5. Elections

Campus Groups must follow set election dates and procedures, including the procedure of nomination, majority vote and eligibility of vote. Students may create additional positions in September particularly for first-year students in an effort to encourage first-year student involvement. If election procedures are deemed to be unfair by reasonable standards by the Clubs Committee or the Academic Societies Affairs Committee, these results will be subject to a petition by a member and re-election will be held under the supervision of the UTMSU Campus Groups Coordinator.

#### Election Procedures:

- All registered groups must hold an election in the Winter Semester, following the timeline set by the UTMSU
- A Chief Returning Officer (CRO) must be appointed to supervise the elections. The CRO must be an unbiased third party to the election, and must be approved by the outgoing executives and the Campus Groups Coordinator. The CRO must not be running for a position on the incoming executive team.
- Elections must be open to all interested candidates who are UTMSU registered members of the group.

#### Election Timeline

- Advertising Period: Advertising for elections is required and is to take place for a minimum of one week. Mass emails should be sent to all UTMSU registered members of the group
- Nomination Period: All members who are interested in running for an executive position are able to self-nominate during this time. This will be overseen and managed by the CRO.
- All Candidates Meeting: A meeting with all the candidates must be held to go over the elections rules. This meeting is mandatory for all future candidates, and if unable to attend, they must send a representative.
- Campaign Period: During this time, candidates are able to campaign themselves to the Campus Groups's membership.
- Voting Period: Registered UTMSU members will be able to vote for their incoming executives during this time. The CRO will organize the voting platform.

#### Election Policies

Any complaints that arise during the course of elections, or as a result of elections must be brought to the attention of the Campus Groups Coordinator in a written format within 72 hours of the election.

The Clubs Committee and ASAC withhold the right to nullify any group's election results if evidence of gross misconduct has been found in the operation of the election.

Non-occurrence of elections will result in the immediate effect of cancellation of a group's status. Non-submission of election results will result in later loss of group recognition status through the Club's Committee or ASAC. If undemocratic election procedures are suspected, the election results or even the group status may be put forward to the Clubs Committee/ASAC by the VP Campus Life or VP University Affairs.

In the event of a tie, the CRO shall select an unbiased executive 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.

#### **6. Finances**

The Finance Officer shall keep records of all income and expenses. The Finance Officer shall present the group's financial health at the annual general meetings. The Executive Committee will vote on expenditures of over \$100.00 by majority vote at an executive meeting.

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.

## **7. 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 a two-thirds 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 bi-weekly basis where date and times are to be set by an executive. The quorum of executive meetings shall be 50%+1 of executives.

## **8. Amendments**

Only UTMSU members may propose and vote on amendments to the constitution. The amended constitution is only finalized after it has been reviewed/approved by the UTMSU.

Constitutional amendments shall require a two-thirds majority to be passed at Annual General Meetings by registered UTMSU members in attendance.

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