Constitution of "Groundup Startups UTM"

1. Name

The official name of this recognized campus group is "Groundup Startups UTM".

The acronym or abbreviation of this group is: GSU

2. Purpose and Objectives

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

Purpose:
> To connect ambitious and entrepreneurial UofT students and provide them with the tools and community to go from idea to product/service over the school year.

Objectives:
- Help students find like-minded partners to collaborate on a business project or startup.
- Host weekly events (co-working sessions, workshops and seminars)
- Workshops and large events are open to everyone, helping students develop personal skills.
- Invite credible and successful founders/speakers to lead workshops and AMA sessions
- Provide guidance, time management and accountability help
- Help students with the ideation process and create a constructive community with collaborative insights to business/product execution
- Help students find product-market-fit
- Establish accountability and ensure consistency through weekly check-ins and group discussions

Mission:
- Lower the barrier of entry for entrepreneurship, and foster a driven community making an impact through innovation.

3. Membership

Membership in the group is open to all registered students of the University of Toronto (referred to here as "student members"). Non-voting membership may be extended to interested staff, faculty, and alumni, or persons from outside the University (referred to here as "external members").

Student members are permitted to run, nominate, and vote in elections and constitutional amendments. External members do not hold the aforementioned rights. All members must register with a designated executive by submitting their full name and a valid university-associated email address.

There will be no cost ($0 membership fee) to join the club. However, if specific events or workshops require funding, the entrance fees will be shared among the members who choose to attend these events.
Attendees who pay for special events are eligible for a full refund under the condition that the refund request is submitted a minimum of 5 days prior to the event.

Members will be expected to attend weekly meetings regularly. We will enforce a **3-strike policy** where failure to attend 3 weekly sessions over the semester (without reasonable justification) will result in a removal from the project. This decision will include consultation with the executive committee to fairly assess each individual's participation. If there is a valid reason for an absence, the executive team will review the circumstances and determine whether the strike should be upheld.

4. Executive List and Duties

The executive committee shall be comprised of five (5) elected officers. These include:

President/Co-Presidents

The President's role encompasses a diverse set of skills essential for setting the club's vision and strategy, making high-level decisions, building the leadership team, representing the club externally, fostering culture and values, and overseeing operations.

To define and drive the club's vision and strategy, the Co-Presidents develop and communicate a clear long-term mission, establish strategic goals and priorities, and adapt the club's direction in response to external factors such as membership trends, executive and member availability, technological developments, and economic conditions.

High-level decisions undertaken by the President(s) include approving major investments, forming partnerships or securing sponsors that can accelerate the club's growth and support members' startup initiatives. They also have authority over budget approvals and resource allocation.

The Co-Presidents are responsible for building and empowering the leadership team by assigning roles to executive members based on their strengths, ensuring that responsibilities align with the club's goals. They also set clear expectations and hold leaders accountable for their contributions. This involves quality assurance and support across all executive disciplines to ensure workload management and execution.

External representation is crucial for advancing the club's profile and supporting members' ventures. As such, the President(s) serve(s) as the primary ambassadors of the club, representing it to external stakeholders while upholding the values and mission of the University of Toronto link.

Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)

The Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) role requires a diverse skill set focused on developing marketing strategies, shaping the club's public identity, supporting members in shaping their startup brands, driving demand, overseeing marketing channels, market research, and representing the club externally.

When developing marketing strategies, the CMO must consider the club's goals and objectives, determine how to position the club among other organizations with similar aims, and define the target audience segments.

The CMO is responsible for building and maintaining the club's brand identity and reputation, as well as assisting members in developing consistent and compelling brands for their startups.

Driving demand for the club is a central aspect of the CMO's role. This includes planning and executing campaigns to generate leads and enhance the club's visibility. To accomplish this, the CMO oversees marketing channels such as advertising, events, social media, and partnerships while actively researching member insights to inform strategy.

Chief Technology Officer (CTO):

The Chief Technology Officer (CTO) role focuses on setting the technology vision and strategy, overseeing product development, building and managing club websites, helping startups with technical operations, and representing the club externally.

Setting the technology vision and strategy involves defining the long-term technology roadmap to support the club's web performance. The CTO identifies emerging technologies that could benefit the club and ensures that the technology strategy aligns with the club's marketing and business objectives.

In overseeing product development, the CTO leads the creation of platforms or services, selects appropriate frameworks and tools, approves technology standards and coding practices, and ensures that all solutions are secure and reliable for both the club and its members.

Additionally, the CTO is responsible for data security and ensuring that all systems meet the club's evolving needs.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO):

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) role focuses on developing financial strategies, managing budgets and forecasts, and preparing financial reports to track available resources. This involves treasury management, event planning and investor relations.

The CFO develops financial plans that prioritize long-term strategies to support the club's objectives. This typically involves creating financial models for revenue growth, expenses, and cash flow, and advising on the financial implications of strategic decisions.

Budgeting and forecasting are key aspects of the CFO's responsibilities. The CFO manages the budget, then plans events based on resources and forecasts.

Maintaining and building investor relations is also a central part of the role. The CFO is responsible for communicating with stakeholders (club members if membership fees are implemented) and potential panellists/investors. Additionally, preparing investor presentations and ensuring the club's reputation remains strong and credible within the community are important aspects of this position.

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

Requirements for all executive positions:

To ensure the club's success, all executive members must actively contribute to project planning and outreach initiatives.

Regarding project planning, each executive member is responsible for organizing a minimum of two workshops throughout the school year, focused on topics such as startup development, team building, and guiding to support members in their journeys as current or aspiring entrepreneurs. Additionally, the executive committee should secure at least two guest speakers from any business sector that could offer valuable insights to club members.

To attract and engage prospective members, the executive committee should also be proficient in using the club's social media platforms throughout the academic year. This includes generating leads for new members, creating or participating in engaging content to enhance the club's visibility, and making timely announcements for both current and prospective members.

Termination of Executives or General Members:

Any member or executive of the club who commits an act negatively affecting the interests of the club and/or their startup team, including non-disclosure of a significant or continuing conflict of interest, may be given notice of removal. Members are also subject to removal when failing to meet the 3-strike policy outlined in the membership agreement.

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

A two-thirds majority vote of the members' corresponding team and the executive team in favour of removal is required. The member must have the right to an appeal before the voting takes place. The majority vote of their team and club executives 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.

Executives are subject to the same termination or impeachment process as determined by a full executive team vote. In the case of a ⅔ majority in favour of removal, the executive position, along with their membership in the group, is revoked.

5. **Elections**

The executive committee shall strike the Elections Committee and appoint one (1) Senior Election Officer (SEO) from the general student membership 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 conflicts of interest in the election.

The SEO Election Officer shall accept nominations only from student members of the group 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 a startup team for at least one full semester before the nomination period.

The SEO 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 before election dates and must fall on weekdays.

The SEO shall create a Google Form which only permits students with valid UofT email addresses to place a single electoral vote.

In preparation for a tie, the SEO shall receive a final vote from the President(s) to cast their ballot and seal it in an envelope. If the President(s) have conflicting votes, then the responsibility is moved to another randomly selected executive. If the tie concerns the President's role, the SEO selects a non-President executive to cast the final ballot. In the event of a tie for an executive position, one of the two Scrutinizers shall break the seal and count the ballot to break the tie.

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

Student members may not vote by proxy. External members may not nominate or vote in elections.

Only student members who have been a member in good standing for 30 days before the election dates are eligible to vote.

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

6. Finances

The Treasurer/CFO shall keep records of all income and expenses. The Treasurer 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 before 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 2/3 majority of student members in attendance for a vote to be cast. The motion with the most votes will be passed.

b) Executive Meetings:

The executives shall meet every week, where the date and times are to be set on an availability basis, and discussed among the team. The quorum of executive meetings shall be 50%+1 of executives.

For the Annual General Meetings hosted by the club, attendance is mandatory for all executive officers and highly encouraged for all members.

Two Annual General Meetings will be held each academic year: one at the beginning of the fall semester and another at the start of the winter semester. These meetings will focus on the club's vision, organizational structure, and expectations for members and their start-up initiatives.

The executive committee is also required to meet weekly. These meetings will cover topics such as schedules and availability, as well as the tasks and goals assigned to each executive member. Attendance is compulsory, and failure to attend without a reasonable justification may result in removal from the executive team.

In addition, executive members must oversee start-up projects through weekly meetings with the project teams. These sessions are intended to ensure a transparent exchange of information between the executive representative and the start-up group. During these meetings, members may request non-monetary resources, such as additional personnel to support their project or assistance in connecting with specific types of investors. Special amendments will be accounted for on a case-by-case basis, depending on the feasibility and complexity of each situation. In general, executive members will be responsible for supporting start-up teams throughout these weekly meetings.

8. Amendments

Any student member 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 student 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, etc) within two (2) weeks of its approval by the general student membership.

Club members will be able to propose and vote on amendments that are linked to the club's constitution. Ideally, amendments will be institutionalized during AGMs. Any meetings with regards to the constitution/amendments will have to be communicated to SEO, who will arrange a meeting with the executive committee in order to obtain a meeting discussing the club's constitution to come to action.

The addition, removal, or modification of amendments will require a unanimous vote composed (2/3) of the members displaying support of one of the options previously mentioned.

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, etc) within two (2) weeks of its approval by the general student membership.