



University of Toronto Religion Undergraduate Student Association Constitution

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Article I. Scope and Definition

A. The name of the organization shall be the 'Religion Undergraduate Student Association', 'RUSA', hereinafter referred to as the 'RUSA'. Unless otherwise stated, 'member' shall refer to any person who is a member of the RUSA as outlined in Article III. The term 'E.C.' shall refer to the RUSA's Executive Committee, as outlined in Article V. The term 'Core Executive' shall refer to RUSA's President, Director of Internal Affairs, Director of External Affairs, Communications Director, and Treasurer.

B. The Arts and Science Students' Union shall hereinafter be referred to as 'ASSU'. The Constitution of the RUSA shall not be inconsistent with the ASSU Constitution in part or in whole. In the case of conflict, the ASSU Constitution takes precedence.

C. The Department of Religion of the University of Toronto shall hereinafter be referred to as 'the Department'.

Article II. Purpose and Responsibilities

A. The RUSA shall exist for the purpose of nourishing interest in religious studies, representing its members and acting on behalf of their interest, and assisting ASSU with the furthering of its objectives as outlined in the ASSU Constitution.

B. To carry out this purpose, the RUSA shall:

- Obtain and allocate funds in a manner consistent with its purpose as outlined in section II. A.
- Liaise with the Department on issues pertinent to the interests of its members.
- Inform and advise its members and ASSU of issues and policies affecting the RUSA's members, its purpose, and/or all undergraduate students.
- Organize lectures, symposia and other events to enhance the academic life of its members and promote friendship and understanding between the RUSA's members and the Department's faculty, graduate students and the community at large.
- Deliver other services that may further the purpose of the RUSA or ASSU.

Article III. Membership

A. The RUSA's membership shall comprise of:

- All full-time St George campus Arts & Science students enrolled in at least one half-course equivalent (0.5 FCE) offered by the Department during the current academic year.
- All full-time St George campus Arts & Science students enrolled in a program in the Department or enrolled in a joint program coordinated by the Department.

Article IV. Meetings and Procedures

A. Meetings of the E.C. shall be called and conducted according to the provisions enumerated herein

- The E.C. shall meet at least one (1) time during every month that classes are offered in the fall-spring sessions. Meetings of the E.C. shall be called upon the request of any member of the E.C.
- Meetings of the E.C. may either be private, in which case non-E.C. members may not attend, or may occur as part of general membership meetings as outlined in IV.B
- The quorum for an E.C. meeting shall be fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of its membership.
- The President shall preside over meetings of the E.C. or appoint another member of the E.C. to preside. The person presiding shall retain their vote, if applicable.
- Each member of the E.C. shall have one (1) vote. Decision of the E.C. shall be made upon the affirmative vote of fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of the members present.
- Meetings held to ratify or change appointments to positions on the E.C. shall be held in as close accord as possible to the guidelines for elections.
- Items shall be procured for the RUSA as follows:

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- a. The E.C. member shall, upon purchasing the item, return any receipts obtained as well as change or unspent funds to the Treasurer responsible for maintaining the RUSA budget, who in turn shall immediately return such money to the RUSA account.
 - b. The E.C. member responsible for purchasing items for the RUSA shall be given a cheque, signed by at least two (2) signing officers as outlined in Section V.B.2.a., for the specific amount budgeted for the item.
 - c. At the last E.C. meeting before the last general meeting in the spring, the Secretary shall present to the rest of the E.C. a brief summary of the activities of the RUSA for that year, including issues and activities expected for the upcoming year. Upon approval by the E.C., this report shall be presented to the members at the last general meeting for approval and kept on record for at least one (1) year

B. General membership meetings shall be called and conducted according to the following provisions:

- General meetings shall only be held on dates when classes are offered. Regular general membership meetings shall be called by the E.C. There shall be a minimum of two (2) such meetings a year, the first in the fall term, the other during the spring term. At least two (2) weeks' public notice shall be given of regular general membership meetings, and business pertaining to them.
- Any business, excepting elections, removal of E.C. members, and amendments to this Constitution, not specified in the notice of a regular general meeting may be dealt with upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of members present and voting.
- The RUSA shall adopt ASSU Council's Rules of Procedure for general membership meetings or adopt its own Rules of Procedure consistent with this Constitution and not inconsistent with those of ASSU. When and if any doubt occurs, ASSU Council's Rules of Procedure shall be taken to be authoritative. The general membership may suspend the Rules of Procedure only for the duration of the meeting at which the suspension is adopted and only with unanimous consent.
- In the spring, the RUSA shall hold elections to the E.C. If after the spring elections, the E.C. numbers fewer than five (5), a regular general meeting shall be called to elect members to vacant positions or to ratify or change appointments made to the E.C. in the fall. This meeting shall take place at least two (2) weeks and at most three (3) weeks from the start of the fall term.
- Upon election of the new E.C., all records of the RUSA will be given to the new E.C. If no E.C. is elected at the last general meeting in the spring, any and all records of the RUSA shall be given to ASSU, until such time as an E.C. is elected.

-The quorum for a general membership meeting shall be five (5), not including members of the E.C. Records of minutes shall be kept for all general meetings for at least one (1) year after the date of the meeting.

-The President shall preside over general meetings, with the exception of elections, see Section IV.C.4. If the President is able to do so, they will appoint another member of the E.C. to preside. The person presiding shall retain their voting rights for the meeting.

-Only current members of the RUSA may vote at general meetings, and each member of the RUSA shall have exactly one (1) vote for any given decision.

-Decisions of the general membership will be made upon the affirmative vote of fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of its members present and voting, except in cases where specified otherwise by this constitution.

-A special general meeting may be called by the E.C. or upon the written request of five (5) members of the RUSA. Upon receiving such a request the E.C. must hold a general meeting within two (2) weeks. Public notice of special general meetings and business pertaining to them shall be given at least one (1) week prior to the meeting.

a. No elections may be held during a special general meeting. No amendments to this Constitution may be passed during such a meeting.

b. Special general meetings can only deal with such business as was specified in their notice.

C. Elections shall be conducted as follows:

-Members of the E.C., with the exception of the First Year Representative, Visual Arts Director (if activated), and any Flexible Positions (if activated and no eligible students appointed to them) shall be annually elected in the spring for a term lasting until the end of the current session.

-First Year Representatives, Visual Arts Directors (if activated), any Flexible Positions (if activated and no eligible students appointed to them), and all E.C. positions not filled in the spring election shall be annually elected at the beginning of the academic year for a term lasting until the end of the current session.

-A member of the RUSA executive who is not running for election in the spring shall be selected as the Chief Returning Officer. It is the duty of the CRO to ensure that all elections are conducted in accordance with the ASSU and RUSA Constitutions. If voting is conducted in person, the CRO will ensure attendance is taken (as outlined below), and will count the ballots alongside at least one other member of RUSA who is not running for a position as well as any scrutineers appointed by candidates.

-Members of the E.C. who are not members of both ASSU and the RUSA at the time of their election or appointment shall fulfill any and all requirements for their

becoming members of ASSU and the RUSA thirty (30) days before the fall semester or lose their position on the E.C.

- Public notice of elections must be given at least two (2) weeks in advance. ASSU shall be notified of all RUSA elections two (2) weeks in advance. Only positions that were advertised for in this manner will be voted on.

- Elections shall be held at the Department building. If the above is not possible, elections shall be held at a neutral campus location not affiliated with any College or Club.

- Voting at elections shall be done by secret ballot. Ballots must be clearly distinguishable and controlled using identifying and validating measures respectively; the ballots must be held by the RUSA for at least two (2) weeks after the election; and the results of the election, including the number present and voting, their names and student numbers, must be held on file by the RUSA for at least (1) year. Each candidate may select a scrutineer for the ballot count.

- Two (2) weeks shall be allowed for any appeals to the RUSA's elections. In the absence of any appeals, the results of the elections shall be ratified.

- Spring elections shall run in accordance with the RUSA's electoral bylaws. Bylaws for elections must be ratified at a general meeting with an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting, prior to the commencement of the election period. Public notice of the election bylaws must be made at least two (2) weeks in advance of the end of the nomination period.

- Members of the RUSA may run for one (1) position in an election.

Article V. Executive Committee

A. The E.C. shall consist of a maximum of ten (10) and a minimum of five (5) elected members. The E.C.'s responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Disseminating information to RUSA members, the public and ASSU.
- Coordinating and promoting student representation on the bodies the RUSA has seats on.
- Reporting to and implementing the decisions of the general membership.
- Other responsibilities that ensure the furthering of the purpose of the RUSA.

B. Roles and Responsibilities of the E.C.

1. General Responsibilities

- a. Each Executive Member shall be expected to attend regular meetings in addition to any other meetings called in accordance with Article IV.

- b. Each Executive Member shall check the agreed upon channels of communication with appropriate regularity.
- c. Each Executive Member shall assist the rest of the E.C. in carrying out decisions and duties in addition to any more duties outlined below.
- d. Each Executive Member must be familiar with the RUSA Constitution
 - e. Each Executive Member shall, upon spending RUSA funds, return all receipts to the Treasurer's designated receipt location.
- f. Each Executive Member shall attend at least one (1) ASSU Council Meeting during the academic year if asked to do so by the President, ensuring that at least two (2) Executive Members, including at least one (1) Core Executive, are present at every ASSU Council Meeting.
- g. Each Executive Member will contribute at least two office hours per week in the RUSA Office (JHB206) if asked to do so by the President.
- h. Each Executive Member shall attend Department meetings if asked to do so by the President, ensuring that at least two (2) Executive Members are present at every department meeting.
- i. Each Executive Member shall advertise RUSA initiatives or events in their classes (provided such classes are offered by the Department or the class content is significantly related to the initiative or event).

2. "Inherent Responsibilities" and "Fluid Responsibilities"

- a. "Inherent Responsibilities" are essential to any given portfolio and cannot be reassigned.
- b. "Fluid Responsibilities" are automatically assigned to and carried out by a specific portfolio, but may be redistributed at the E.C's discretion.
- c. Any Executive Member may take on Fluid Responsibilities. This means that the responsibilities of any individual Executive may exceed the inherent and fluid responsibilities outlined in their specific role description.

3. One (1) President shall serve on the E.C., with the following responsibilities:

- a. Inherent Responsibilities
 - i. Oversee and delegate the proceedings of the entire E.C.
 - ii. Act as a signing officer for the RUSA's bank account.
 - iii. Ensure that recurring events such as general meetings, meetings of the E.C., and elections are organized and occur in a manner consistent with the RUSA and ASSU constitutions.
 - iv. Preside over all general meetings and meetings of the E.C.

- v. Act as the primary liaison between the membership at large (including the E.C.) and ASSU, the Department, and other campus groups.
- vi. Have thorough knowledge of the constitutions of ASSU and RUSA.
- vii. Carry ultimate responsibility for all RUSA affairs.
- viii. Decide whether and in what capacity, the Flexible Position(s) (see V.B.10) will be active while they are President.

b. Fluid Responsibilities

- i. Advocate for the department at Fall Campus Day, Program Exploration Day, and similar events or appoint another member (or members) of the E.C. to attend and participate in these or similar events.

4. One (1) Director of Internal Affairs shall serve on the E.C., with the following responsibilities:

a. Inherent Responsibilities

- i. Manage and ensure the proper organization of RUSA's paperwork.
- ii. Record meeting minutes for all meetings of the E.C. and general meetings.
- iii. Ensure that these meeting minutes are available to all members of the E.C.
- iv. Record the names, student numbers, and signatures of members voting at any RUSA election meeting. This information shall be passed onto ASSU within one (1) week of the meeting.
- v. The Director of Internal Affairs is ultimately responsible for all RUSA affairs with respect to the timing of events, the booking of rooms, the conformity of events to all RUSA and ASSU guidelines/requirements, and the purchase of event-related items.
- vi. Ensure that Co-Curricular Record Validation takes place, and that all members of the E.C. are able to display their RUSA involvement on their Co-Curricular Record.
- vii. Create and maintain a calendar for the E.C. which records the dates and times of all planned RUSA events .

b. Fluid Responsibilities

- i. Assist the President with their duties.
- ii. Undertake initiatives aimed at increasing knowledge of, and engagement with, RUSA among its members.

5. One (1) Director of External Affairs shall serve on the E.C., with the following responsibilities:

a. Inherent Responsibilities

- i. Search for and contact other groups that host events or initiatives that RUSA members would be interested in, including academic conferences and undergraduate journals, alongside any Undergraduate Conferences hosted by the Department.
- ii. Contact and help book speakers for RUSA events.
- iii. Ask professors teaching third and fourth year courses to notify their classes about RUSA events related to the course's content.
- iv. Organize initiatives for the First and Second Year Representatives to take part in or lead.
- v. Ensure that First and Second Year Representatives are provided with all information and training relevant to their roles.

b. Fluid Responsibilities

- i. Act as the first point of contact for the First and Second Year Representatives and the core executive.
- ii. Act as a mentor for the First and Second Year Representatives

6. One (1) Communications Director shall serve on the E.C., with responsibilities as follows:

a. Inherent Responsibilities

- i. Manage the EC emails; a responsibility including but not limited to: maintaining the RUSA listserv and sending RUSA newsletters.
- ii. Coordinate RUSA social media, newsletters, email and print advertising.
- iii. Maintain the web presence of the RUSA.
- iv. Compile all relevant events, initiatives, and news into a monthly newsletter, which is to be published via the Religion undergraduate listserv no later than the first week of any month during the Fall-Winter academic season, excluding September.
- v. Ensure that the constitution is publicly available.

b. Fluid Responsibilities

- i. Update when amendments are passed, maintain proper formatting of, and communicate contents of, the constitution.
- ii. Decide whether or not a Visual Arts Director (see section V.B.11) should be elected in the fall term.

7. One (1) Treasurer shall serve on the E.C., with the following responsibilities:

a. Inherent Responsibilities:

i. Act as a signing officer for the RUSA's bank account. There shall be at least two (2) signing officers for the RUSA's banking account; they shall be the President and the Treasurer of the E.C. Any cheque issued against the account shall require at least two (2) signatures:

1. The signature of the Treasurer,
2. The signature of the President

ii. In cooperation with other members of the E.C., prepare and maintain the RUSA budget.

iii. Maintain records of all receipts of the RUSA, and be responsible for complying with ASSU's auditing process.

b. Fluid Responsibilities

i. In individual cases the Inherent Responsibilities of the Treasurer may be transferred to the other signing officers.

8. One (1) Second Year Representative shall serve on the E.C., with responsibilities as follows:

a. Inherent Responsibilities

- i. Be in their second year at U of T.
- ii. Represent second-year students to the EC.
- iii. Collaborate with the First Year Representative to organize at least one (1) event oriented to lower-year religion students.
- iv. Help facilitate the transition of second-year students into the religious studies community.
- v. Deliver messages from RUSA to second year classes, either by contacting the professors teaching those classes, or by speaking to the class

b. There are no fluid responsibilities for the Second Year Representative.

9. One (1) First Year Representative shall serve on the E.C., with responsibilities as follows:

a. Inherent Responsibilities

- i. Be in their first year at U of T.
- ii. Represent first-year students to the EC.
- iii. Collaborate with the Second Year Representative to organize at least one (1) event oriented to lower-year religion students.
- iv. Help facilitate the transition of first-year students into the religious studies community.

v. Deliver messages from RUSA to first year classes, either by contacting the professors teaching those classes, or by speaking to the class.

b. There are no fluid responsibilities for the First Year Representative.

10. One (1) or Two (2) Flexible Positions may be activated at the President's discretion:

a. Activation

i. At any point the President may decide to activate One (1) or Two (2) Flexible Positions.

ii. These positions may be created for a predetermined time period, or may remain active so long as the President who activated them remains President.

iii. The President retains the right to deactivate the Flexible Positions at any time and for any reason.

iv. The President may either appoint an eligible student to a Flexible Position, or allow the position to be filled in the Fall Election.

b. Inherent Responsibilities

i. As determined by the President, so long as such responsibilities do not overlap with those of another executive or are counter to any article of the RUSA Constitution.

c. There are no fluid responsibilities for the Flexible Positions.

-Note: The Flexible Positions were created so that the President has the ability to expand RUSA's operations beyond what is included in the other Executives' Inherent Responsibilities. Some recommended uses of Flexible Positions include: appointing a student to engage with a singular issue (e.g. mental health among undergraduate students, student workload, etc.) or to plan a singular event (e.g. a student wishes to invite a speaker to give a talk, a student wants to hold a cross-disciplinary event, etc.). It is recommended that the President receive approval from the other members of the E.C. before activating a Flexible Position. Use of the Flexible Position for any purpose contrary to Article II of the Constitution (e.g. abusing the position by appointing a friend in order to pad the friend's resume, etc.) is grounds for impeachment under sections V.D.2.a.i.3 and V.D.2a.i.4. of the RUSA Constitution.

11. One (1) Visual Arts Director position may be activated at the Communications Director's discretion:

a. Activation

i. Upon being elected, the Communications Director may decide to activate the Visual Arts Director position.

ii. If activated, one (1) eligible student will be elected to the position in the Fall election.

b. Inherent Responsibilities

i. Create any graphics (poster, social media graphics, etc.) required by the Communication Director or other members of the E.C. in a timely manner.

c. There are no fluid responsibilities for the Visual Art Director

C. Members of the E.C. shall coordinate tasks amongst themselves pursuant to the purposes of the RUSA. The E.C. may, at the option, appoint individuals to fill vacancies that arise on the E.C. and other RUSA committees between general meetings subject to change or ratification at the next general membership meeting.

D. Resignation, Removal and Impeachment Proceedings

1) Resignation Procedure

a) An Executive Member may resign their position at any time by notifying the EC in writing. The resignation is effective immediately upon receipt.

b) If the resigned individual changes their mind, they do not automatically get their position back, but may run for the open position at the subsequent by-election, with the usual procedures of Article 4 taking place.

2) Impeachment Criteria and Procedure

a) Impeachment Criteria

i) Just causes for impeachment are:

(1) If any Executive Member fails to fulfill the Inherent Responsibilities of their position to their best ability; or

(2) If any Executive Member consistently fails to carry out their Fluid Responsibilities; or,

(3) If any Executive Member abuses their position for personal reasons; or,

(4) If any Executive Member fails to act in good faith; or,

(5) If any Executive Member misses two (2) meetings in a row without explanation.

ii) If any Executive Member does any of the above, they shall be recommended to the E.C. for impeachment by a member of RUSA. Should one (1) other Executive Member agree with this, then Impeachment Proceedings will commence.

b) Impeachment Procedure

- i) The president shall notify the individual that they are being considered for impeachment and explain the reasoning.
- ii) A meeting shall be set between the individual and the E.C. at a reasonable time during which the individual will be questioned. Should the individual fail to attend the meeting or refuse to compromise on a meeting schedule, the E.C. may vote summarily.
- iii) After the E.C.'s questioning is complete, the individual being considered for impeachment will have a chance to make a final statement. After this, a discussion and vote will be taken in private. The individual being examined for impeachment shall not be able to take part in the discussion or vote on their impeachment.
- iv) Should two-thirds of the E.C. in attendance agree to impeachment, the individual is considered impeached and dismissed from their position immediately.
- v) The impeached individual may not run in any subsequent by-elections for RUSA E.C. positions for that academic year.
- vi) When an Executive Member is impeached, election proceedings as outlined in Article IV shall commence at a suitable date.

Article VI: Amendments

A. Amendments to this constitution may be made at regular general meetings on the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting.

- Public notice of any and all proposed amendments must be given no less than one (1) week prior to the date of the meeting.

- The E.C. must be given notice at least fourteen (14) days from the date of the meeting.

- The results of all votes for amendments to this constitution, including the number present and voting, shall be kept on record for at least one (1) year.

B. Any amendments to this constitution shall come into effect immediately at the meeting at which they are adopted.

C. RUSA shall provide ASSU with at least one (1) copy of this constitution and subsequent updates to it within fourteen (14) days of adoption.

Revision History:

2021, Fall Semester - Constitution written

Acknowledgements:

The original draft of this constitution was prepared in the 2021-2022 academic year by Owen Huisman. Much of the content of the constitution was based upon three documents: The Constitution of the Philosophy Course Union (PCU) and two of RUSA's earlier partial constitutions/role descriptions. I would like to thank the following individuals: RUSA President Mukti Patel for trusting me to prepare the Constitution, as well as for providing the two RUSA documents mentioned above; the PCU Co-Presidents Mina Ali and Nicole Shi for giving me permission to reproduce large sections of the PCU Constitution; ASSU Executive Coordinator Jane Seto for providing important feedback in regards to the constitution's alignment with existing ASSU regulations; and the entire 2021-2022 RUSA E.C. for listening to me go over the constitution in meetings and helping me to work out any issues.