

# **Constitution of "Buddhist Contemplative Care Student Sangha"**

## **1. Name**

The official name of this recognized campus group is "Buddhist Contemplative Care Student Sangha"

The acronym or abbreviation of this group is: **BCCS**

## **2. Purpose and Objectives**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of BCCS is to integrate the academic learning that takes place in the classroom into our meditation practice, as well as in the day to day services we provide in our professional roles in contemplative care. We support the individual and collective practices of our Buddhist student members through providing access to resources and supports available at the University of Toronto. As students we will strive to discern the practical nature of our studies in Buddhism and merge these teachings with our deep spiritual commitment to care for others with wisdom and compassion.

### **VISION**

To sit together, taking refuge in the teachings of the Buddha. And to create a society of insightful, compassionate caregivers that seek to alleviate suffering in our communities.

### **GOALS**

- Deepen our meditation practice in a supportive, safe, collaborative community
- Gain further understanding of Buddhist teachings from diverse traditions and perspectives
- Enhance our learning on the various methodologies of contemplative care practices
- Create networks of care that provide resources and support to students who are providing pastoral care in institutional and community-based settings

### **HOW?**

- Holding a weekly sit for nascent and experienced meditators
- Inviting meditation/Buddhist teachers from a variety of traditions to give talks and facilitate workshops
- Invite guest speakers that use contemplative care practices within their roles as professional caregivers (i.e. therapists, doctors, teachers, etc.)
- To support those providing care to others by mentoring, peer-support and sharing of resources by holding meetings and online networking such as blogging.

## **3. Membership**

The group is open to all University of Toronto members, including students, staff, faculty, and alumni, as well as non-U of T members.

**Voting Membership:** Voting membership is open exclusively to currently registered students of the University of Toronto who are also members of the club. Only registered student members hold the right to run for executive positions, nominate candidates, and vote in elections and constitutional amendments. Staff, faculty, alumni, and other members of the U of T community, as well as non-U of T members, may participate in the group's activities but are not permitted to vote or hold executive positions.

Members must register with a designated executive by submitting their full name and a valid email address.

The membership fee will be \$\_\_\_\_\_ per year.

Any member of the club may apply for a full refund of their membership fee 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 Students' Union (UTSU), the group must maintain a minimum of 30 members, with a total of 51% of membership being UTSU members. The group must also maintain recognition from the Office of Student Life. These requirements are subject to change and should be checked with UTSU annually to ensure qualifications are met.

#### **4. Executive List and Duties**

The executive committee shall be comprised of four (4) elected officers: President, Vice-President, Communications Officer, and Treasurer. **All members of the executive committee must be currently registered students of the University of Toronto at the time of their election and throughout their term of office.**

##### **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 Treasurer for financial purposes
- Preside over board meetings as well as general meetings
- Ensure transition of office to the future Executives

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

- Assume duties of the President in their absence
- Oversee the various committees
- Ensure that all the activities of the club meet regulations and policies of the University of Toronto
- Coordinate organizational recruitment efforts

##### **The Communications Officer shall:**

- Make a list of all registered members
- Maintain the websites and member contact list
- Record notes and motions for meetings
- Notify all members of meetings
- Handle official correspondence of the organization

**The Treasurer 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 financial position of the group
- Prepare an annual budget for the group as well as budgets for specific events

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

## **5. Termination of Membership**

**Grounds and Process for Removal:**

The Executive Committee may revoke the membership of 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.

- A vote to revoke membership must be held at a meeting of the Executive Committee.
- The member facing removal shall be notified in advance and shall have the right to present a defence of their actions to the Executive Committee before any vote is held.
- A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Executive Committee is required to approve any motion to revoke membership.
- Executive Committee members are subject to the same termination process as general members. An Executive member facing removal shall not participate in or vote on the motion concerning their own removal.

**Right of Appeal:**

Any member facing removal of executive office and/or termination of membership has the right to appeal the decision of the Executive Committee to the general membership. The appeals process shall be separate in interest and membership from the Executive Committee's initial decision, as follows:

- The member wishing to appeal must notify the Executive Committee in writing within fourteen (14) days of receiving notice of the revocation decision.

- Upon receipt of a valid appeal, the Executive Committee shall convene a general meeting of the membership within thirty (30) days, at which the appealing member shall have the opportunity to address the membership and present their case.
- A simple majority vote (50%+1) of the registered voting members present at the general meeting shall be required to overturn the Executive Committee's decision to revoke membership.
- If the membership votes to overturn the revocation, the member's membership and any associated privileges shall be reinstated.
- If the membership sustains the revocation, or if no appeal is submitted within the fourteen (14) day window, the member will be permanently removed from the club's membership and will lose all privileges associated with being a member of the club.

## **6. Elections**

The executive committee shall strike the Elections Committee and appoint one (1) Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and two (2) Scrutinizers from the general members 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 and all conflicts of interest in the election.

The CRO shall accept nominations only from group members who are currently registered students of the University of Toronto for candidacy of executive positions, before the beginning of March. Candidates must be members in good standing and have been part of the group for at least one month prior to the nomination period.

The CRO shall select three (3) election dates before March 30th for the voting period. These dates will be announced a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to election dates and must fall on weekdays.

The CRO and Scrutinizers shall provide each eligible voting member with a paper ballot on the voting dates and ask the member to place their ballot in an enclosed box.

In preparation for a tie, the CRO shall select an executive from 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.

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

Only currently registered U of T student members who have paid any applicable membership fees and have been members in good standing for 30 days prior to election dates are eligible to vote. Registered student members may not vote by proxy. Staff, faculty, alumni, and non-U of T members may not nominate or vote in elections.

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

## **7. Finances**

The Treasurer 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.

## **8. 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 2/3 majority of registered student 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 monthly basis where date and times are to be set by an executive. The quorum of executive meetings shall be 50%+1 of executives.

## **9. Amendments**

Any registered U of T 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 registered U of T 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. The Office of Student Life, The University of Toronto Students' Union, etc.) within two (2) weeks of its approval by general members.