

Constitution of the *University of Toronto* *Chinese Students and Scholars Association (UTCSSA)*

August 2025

1. Name

- The official name of this recognized student group is the "Chinese Students and Scholars Association at the University of Toronto".
- The acronym/abbreviation of this group is UTCSSA.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The University of Toronto Chinese Students and Scholars Association (UTCSSA) was established in 1982. UTCSSA is dedicated to supporting Chinese students and scholars at the University of Toronto by fostering a welcoming environment for learning, research, work, social connection, and cultural exchange. UTCSSA provides resources and opportunities to support members' academic, career, and personal development, and encourages members to engage with the broader University of Toronto community, the City of Toronto, and Canadian society. UTCSSA promotes cultural understanding and community building through events, peer support, and collaboration with other student and community organizations.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership eligibility

Membership is open to all currently registered University of Toronto students. Non-voting membership may also be extended to interested staff, faculty, alumni, and community members, without restriction on the grounds outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code's prohibited grounds of discrimination.

3.2 Voting membership

Voting privileges for executive and governance matters are reserved for currently registered University of Toronto students, unless otherwise specified in this Constitution.

3.3 Non-voting executive positions

Staff, faculty, or alumni may hold non-voting executive positions. These positions shall be limited to a maximum of one (1) or ten percent (10%) of the full executive body, whichever is greater. Persons holding non-voting executive positions cannot serve as officers (including financial signing officers) or contact persons of the student group.

4. Governance Structure, Executive List, and Duties

4.1 Definitions

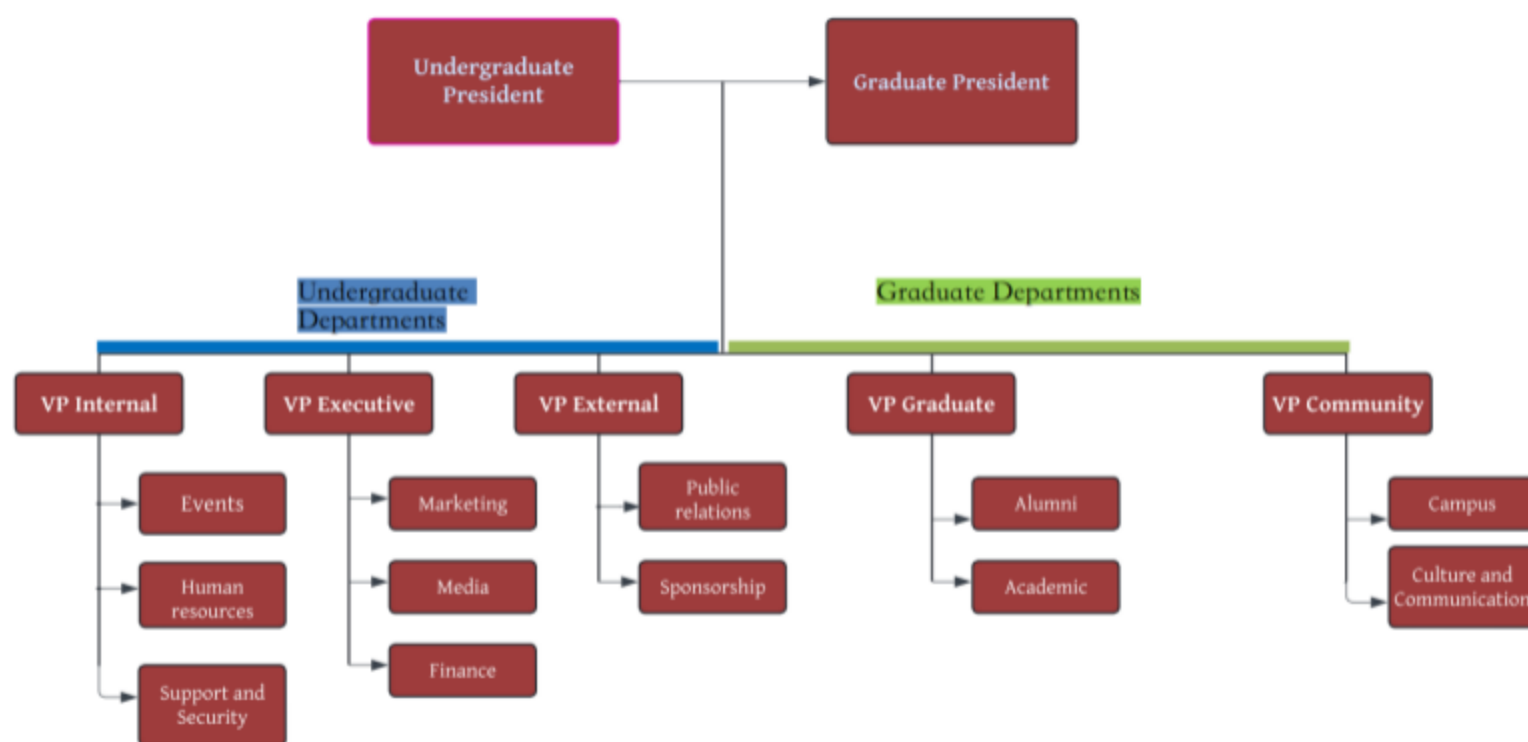
For the purposes of this Constitution:

- "Member" means an individual who meets the membership eligibility requirements in Section 3.
- "Executive" means a member appointed or elected to an executive role within UTCSSA.
- "Executive Committee" means the voting executives responsible for governance decisions as defined in Section 4.3.
- "Annual General Meeting (AGM)" means a meeting of members convened under Section 5.

4.2 Executive roles

UTCSSA shall have the following elected executive roles:

- Two (2) Co-Presidents: Undergraduate President and Graduate President.
- Five (5) Vice Presidents: VP Internal, VP Executive, VP External, VP Graduate, and VP Community.
- Twelve (12) Departments: Events; Human Resources; Support and Security; Marketing; Media; Finance; Public Relations; Sponsorship; Alumni; Academic; Campus; Culture and Communication.
- Each Department shall have one (1) Director and up to three (3) Vice Directors (or equivalent deputy roles).
- The Executive Committee may appoint a General Secretary (non-departmental) to support administration and record keeping.



4.3 Executive Committee composition

The Executive Committee shall consist of the two Co-Presidents, the five Vice Presidents, and all Department Directors. The General Secretary, if appointed, is a non-voting officer unless otherwise designated by the Executive Committee.

4.4 Duties

4.4.1 Duties of the Co-Presidents

The Co-Presidents are jointly responsible for the overall leadership and management of UTCSSA. Their duties include: setting the organization's vision and priorities; ensuring each part of the organization functions appropriately; convening and chairing Executive Committee meetings and AGMs; overseeing compliance with this Constitution and any applicable university policies; supervising Vice Presidents; and ensuring responsible financial stewardship in collaboration with the Treasurer/Finance Director.

4.4.2 Duties of Vice Presidents

Each Vice President supervises two to three Departments and supports coordination between the Co-Presidents and Department Directors. Vice Presidents are responsible for ensuring Departments receive clear information, meet deadlines, and operate consistently with UTCSSA's goals and policies.

- VP Internal supervises: Events; Human Resources; Support and Security.
- VP Executive supervises: Marketing; Media; Finance.
- VP External supervises: Public Relations; Sponsorship.
- VP Graduate supervises: Alumni; Academic.
- VP Community supervises: Campus; Culture and Communication.

4.4.3 Duties of Department Directors and Vice Directors

Department Directors are responsible for planning and executing the Department's work, distributing tasks to executives, training and onboarding new executives, monitoring progress, and conducting fair performance appraisals. Vice Directors support the Director and may act in the Director's place when delegated.

4.5 Advisory bodies

4.5.1 UTCSSA Council

The UTCSSA Council is voluntarily composed of former Presidents of UTCSSA. All Council members have equal rights. The Council may provide advice to the Executive Committee when requested, including introducing social resources and offering perspectives on internal conflicts. The Council shall not override decisions made by the Executive Committee.

4.5.2 Consultant Council

The Consultant Council is composed of former members of UTCSSA Executive Committees. Members may attend UTCSSA events under the same conditions as other members, as determined by event policies. The Consultant Council shall not interfere with Executive Committee decisions and shall not represent UTCSSA.

4.5.3 Honorary Executives

Honorary Executives are recognized executives from the previous year. Honorary Executives shall not intervene in Executive Committee decisions and shall not represent UTCSSA.

5. Meetings

5.1 Annual General Meetings (AGMs)

UTCSSA shall hold up to two (2) AGMs per academic year. AGMs are open to all members. AGM notices (including date, time, location, and agenda) should be communicated to members at least seven (7) days in advance.

5.2 Executive meetings

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once per month during the academic term, or as otherwise determined by the Co-Presidents. Meeting minutes shall be recorded and retained by the General Secretary or a designate.

5.3 Quorum and voting at meetings

Quorum for an Executive Committee meeting shall be a simple majority (50% + 1) of voting members of the Executive Committee. Unless otherwise specified, motions shall pass by simple majority of those present and voting. Quorum and voting rules for AGMs shall be determined by UTCSSA bylaws, provided they do not contradict this Constitution.

6. Elections

6.1 Election Committee and Chief Returning Officer (CRO)

Annual elections shall be held no later than April 30 of each year. To conduct the election, the Executive Committee shall establish an Election Committee and appoint a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) at least fourteen (14) days before the election date. The CRO does not have to be a current member of UTCSSA but must be impartial and familiar with this Constitution and the election procedures.

6.2 Candidate eligibility

To be eligible to run and hold elected office, a candidate must:

- Be a currently registered student at the University of Toronto (St. George Campus).

- Be an active member of UTCSSA in good standing for at least one (1) month before the nomination period.
- Agree to uphold this Constitution and the mission of UTCSSA.

It is recommended that Vice President candidates have at least one (1) year of prior membership in UTCSSA by the date of election, and that Co-President candidates have at least one and a half (1.5) years of prior membership by the date of election. Co-Presidents are elected annually and serve a one (1) year term.

6.3 Voting eligibility

Voting shall be one vote per person. Proxy or delegated votes are not permitted. Unless otherwise specified by bylaws approved by the Executive Committee and consistent with university policy, all currently registered University of Toronto students are eligible to vote in UTCSSA elections.

6.4 Election process

The election process shall be democratic, fair, transparent, and publicly communicated, including:

- Posting the list of positions, nomination requirements, deadlines, election date, and voting procedures.
- Collecting candidate statements (past work summary and future plan) and publishing them to members at least three (3) days before the election date.
- Conducting voting in person where feasible, or online where in-person voting is not feasible.

In-person voting shall be supervised by the CRO. Online voting platforms should provide confidentiality, transparency, and one-vote-per-person controls.

6.5 Results, ties, and uncontested positions

Candidates shall be elected by simple majority of valid ballots cast. In the case of a tie, a run-off vote shall be held on the same date where feasible. If a tie remains after a run-off, the CRO shall apply a tie-breaking method disclosed in advance (for example, a sealed ballot cast by a designated neutral executive or a random draw).

If only one candidate is running for a position, the position shall be confirmed only if the candidate receives more than 50% 'Yes' of all valid ballots (Yes, No, Abstention). If the threshold is not met, the position shall be treated as vacant and addressed through a by-election or interim arrangement as described in Section 6.6. For Co-President positions, where the threshold is not met in an uncontested election, the outgoing Co-President for that role shall continue as Acting Co-President until a by-election is completed.

6.6 Vacancies and interim appointments

Vacancies may be addressed through a by-election. In the interim, responsibilities shall be covered as follows: (a) Co-President vacancy: the outgoing Co-President shall serve as Acting

Co-President until the by-election is completed; (b) Vice President vacancy: the Co-Presidents shall temporarily assume oversight of the affected Departments and may designate an Acting Vice President; (c) Department Director vacancy: the supervising Vice President may designate an Acting Director (normally a Vice Director). Any interim designation should be reported to the Executive Committee and may be ratified by simple majority vote. Interim arrangements remain in effect only until the vacancy is filled through a by-election or other democratic process consistent with this Constitution and UTCSSA bylaws.

6.7 Election records and appeals

The CRO shall report election results to the Executive Committee and general membership. Where elections are recorded, members shall be informed in advance. Any questions or appeals regarding election fairness or integrity shall be submitted to the CRO. The CRO shall review appeals based on this Constitution and available evidence, and communicate a decision and any corrective actions to members.

7. Internal Promotion and Assessment

UTCSSA may maintain internal executive assessment and promotion procedures (for example, Junior Executive to Senior Executive, or Senior Executive to Vice Director). These operational procedures shall be set out in bylaws or internal policies and shall be applied fairly and transparently.

8. Removal of Executives and Members

Any member or executive who commits an act that materially harms UTCSSA or its members, including failure to disclose a significant or continuing conflict of interest, may be subject to removal. The person under consideration for removal shall receive written notice of the allegations and have an opportunity to respond.

A removal vote shall be held at an Executive Committee meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of voting executives present and voting is required to remove an individual from an executive position and/or membership.

The individual has the right to appeal the decision to the general membership at an AGM or a specially convened general meeting. The outcome of the membership vote by simple majority shall be final.

9. Finance

The Treasurer/Finance Director shall keep records of all income and expenses and present the organization's financial position at each AGM. UTCSSA shall comply with all applicable University of Toronto and UTSU financial policies for student groups.

The Executive Committee must approve any single expenditure over \$100.00 by simple majority vote at an Executive Committee meeting. Expenditures should be supported by receipts or other documentation.

UTCSSA may not engage in essentially commercial activities. This does not preclude charging fees to cover the costs of events, collecting membership fees, or legitimate fundraising activities consistent with UTCSSA's purpose.

10. Constitutional Amendment Procedure

Any currently registered University of Toronto student may propose amendments to this Constitution by submitting the proposed text in writing to the Co-Presidents or General Secretary. The Executive Committee shall ensure proposed amendments are circulated and scheduled for discussion at an AGM.

Constitutional amendments shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote to be passed at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) by registered University of Toronto students in attendance and voting. Upon approval by members, the Executive Committee shall adopt the revised constitution and submit it to the relevant University offices (for example, the Office of Student Life and/or UTSU) within two (2) weeks.

11. Conflict Management Procedure

Conflicts should be resolved by direct communication between the parties involved where possible. Complainants will have the opportunity to be heard by the Executive Committee, and the Executive Committee may suggest possible resolutions. If the Co-Presidents are involved in the conflict and the conflict cannot be resolved internally, a third-party mediator who is not part of UTCSSA may be invited to assist. If any conflict results in a motion to remove an executive or member, the process in Section 8 applies.

12. Bylaws and Policies

UTCSSA may create and maintain bylaws and policies that govern operations not specified in this Constitution. Bylaws and policies shall not contradict this Constitution. If inconsistencies arise, this Constitution takes precedence. All executives are expected to comply with this Constitution and applicable bylaws and policies.

13. University and UTSU governing documents

If any inconsistencies arise between this Constitution and applicable University of Toronto or UTSU constitutions, bylaws, or policies, the University/UTSU governing documents shall take precedence. If any matters are not addressed in this Constitution, the applicable University/UTSU governing documents shall apply.