

The Constitution of the Regent's College Student Union

(First Draft) November 2009

The Constitution of the Regent's College Student Union

1. Name

There shall be a student union, the name of which shall be the Regent's College Student Union (herein after referred to as the *Student Union*).

2. Aims and Objectives

- (a) To be the official representative body for students attending Regent's College
- (b) To operate in a fair and democratic manner, remaining apolitical at all times
- (c) To promote the general welfare of its members
- (d) To advance the education and training of its members
- (e) To encourage and support student societies, sports and social activities (financially or otherwise)

(f) To act as a channel of communication between its members and the College or other bodies; in particular to organise and provide student representation for relevant College committees and meetings

(g) To pursue any matter of relevance to its members as students of the College

(h) To conduct all of the above in a strictly not-for-profit manner

3. Membership

All enrolled students of the College, undertaking a programme of study, shall be assumed to be full members of the *Student Union*. Students who signify they do not wish to be members or to be represented by the *Student Union* will not be disadvantaged in any way.

4. The Executive Committee of the *Student Union*

The *Student Union* Executive shall consist of the college wide elected President of the *Student Union*, the Presidents of the individual Schools' Student Councils (currently one each from EBS, RBS, RACL, Webster and SPCP) which will be elected by the membership of each School, the Vice-president the Secretary and the Treasurer.

The appointments of Vice-president, Secretary and Treasurer will be organized by the elected *Student Union Executive* members. The selection process will be in form of an interview conducted by members of the *Executive*.

Specialized officers for communication, events, charities, networking etc. shall be appointed by the same method, but do not form part of the *Executive*.

The *Executive* may from time to time delegate specific responsibilities to individual members and to such sub-committees as deemed necessary.

The function of the *Executive* shall be to control matters consistent with the aims and objectives of the *Student Union* and to carry out the wishes of the *Student Union* as expressed by the resolution of the Annual General Meeting.

The meetings of the *Executive* shall be convened and conducted as in Schedule 4 of the Constitution.

The *Executive* will carry out policies determined by the *Student Union* under the terms of this Constitution and attached schedules.

A person may be elected to the same executive committee position for a maximum period of two consecutive years. Each person serving on the *Executive* shall not be allowed to fill more than one role at a time. If a position is not taken, other members of the committee should share the position and the responsibility.

There shall be a College nominated representative to act as adviser to the President and *Executive Committee* and also to act as Advisory Treasurer.

5. The President of the *Student Union*

The term of office shall be one year, with a maximum of 2 years, determined by re-election

Applicants for the post will be required to satisfy the Principal or nominated College representative(s) of their experience, suitability and commitment to the role.

The post is open to all members of the *Student Union* who meet the criteria.

In the event that there is only one candidate for election to the position, he/she must receive more votes than the number of no confidence votes cast.

In the event that no candidates are put forward for election, the *Executive Committee* may elect a member to fill the role of acting president. Nominations and a second election should then occur at the beginning of the next term.

In the event that the President resigns or is otherwise prevented from continuing in post, the Vice-president will fill the role of acting president until the next election.

6. The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General meeting of the *Student Union* shall be the supreme Governing Body of the *Student Union* and shall be conducted in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Constitution. If the need arises, an extra-ordinary general meeting can be called.

7. Elections

The President and members of the Executive Committee shall be elected in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Constitution.

8. Minutes

All Annual General Meeting and Executive Meetings shall have minutes recorded and confirmed with any corrections made at the next appropriate meeting. A copy of the minutes of each meeting shall, as soon as possible after the meeting, be placed on the *Student Union* notice boards and posted electronically. A complete record of all minutes signed by the President (Chairperson) shall be kept by the Secretary in a minute book provided for the purpose.

9. Amendments

Amendments of the Constitution and Schedules may only be made at an Annual General Meeting or an extraordinary meeting.

Proposals for amendments must be seconded and put in writing to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting

All amendments shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

Amendments to the Constitution and Schedules shall require the approval of the College. The College reserves the right to propose changes to the Constitution and to implement such changes.

10. Indemnity

Every officer, appointee or member of staff of the *Student Union* shall be entitled to be indemnified out of the assets of the *Student Union* against all losses or liabilities which they may sustain in the execution of their duty or otherwise in relation thereto and no Officer or Appointee or member of staff shall be liable for any loss, damage or misfortune which may happen or be incurred by the *Student Union* in the execution of their duties or in relation

thereto. Provided that nothing in this clause shall affect their liability for the consequences of any act of negligence or other illegal activity on their part.

11. Relationship with the College

The College has no obligation (whether direct or indirect) in respect of debts and liabilities of the *Student Union*. Debts and liabilities of the *Student Union* are the responsibilities of the members of the Executive Committee and the members of the *Student Union*.

12. Finance of the Corporation

The finance of the *Student Union* shall be administered in accordance with Schedule 5 of the constitution

13. Dissolution of the *Student Union*

If, for any reason, the *Student Union* ceases to exist all monies and properties of the *Student Union* shall be held on trust by the College until such time as a *Student Union* is re-constituted.

14. Interpretation

In the event of a dispute as to the interpretation of any of the Constitution or Schedules, the ruling of the President shall be sought, in the event of a challenge to the President's ruling, the decision of an extra-ordinary meeting of the *Student Union* shall be final.

15. Monitoring and review

The *Executive Committee* will review the Constitution at intervals of no more than five years. The College nominated representative will monitor compliance with the Constitution, the Code of Practice and the Complaints Procedure and report to the College on an annual basis.

16. Procedure for allocating resources

The procedure for the allocation of resources to societies and clubs of the *Student Union* shall be in accordance with Schedule 6.

17. Removal from Office

Any officer of the *Student Union*, elected or appointed, can be removed from office through a 'vote of no-confidence' at an extra-ordinary meeting.

The proposal for a vote of no-confidence can be made by any officer of the *Student Union*, elected or appointed. The proposal must be seconded by another officer, elected or appointed and put in writing to the Secretary, stating the reason why removal is sought.

The officer to be removed must receive notification of such procedures 7 days prior to the vote. He/she must be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations at the meeting prior to the vote.

18. Complaints procedure

The complaints procedure for students who are dissatisfied with their dealings with the *Student Union* or claim to be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of having exercised their rights not to be members of the *Student Union* shall be in accordance with Schedule 7.

19. Code of Practice

A Code of Practice relating to the *Student Union* is given in the Appendix.

The *Student Union* must comply with this Constitution, Schedules and the Code of Practice at all times.

SCHEDULE 1 - MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the *Student Union* will be automatic for all those who are properly registered as students of the College and are undertaking a programme of study.

SCHEDULE 2 - REGULATIONS FOR ELECTIONS

Elections shall be conducted in a manner agreed between the *Student Union* Executive Committee and the Principal or the nominated College representative, subject to the following provisos:

- Elections to individual School Student Councils are organised in accordance to the Councils rules and regulations .
- Elections shall be determined by the simple majority system. .
- The election of the President of the *Student Union* shall take place in the Spring Semester no later than the last week in April.
- The election for *Student Union Executive* by the Student Councils of the individual Schools shall take place in the Autumn term no later than the end of the second week in October.
- All College students who are members of the Student Union, as described in Schedule 1 may vote in the elections for the President; School Student Councils are only voted for by students of the particular school.
- All ballots shall be held in secret and all ballot papers shall be counted and recorded, including spoiled or void papers. Voting by email or text message is not acceptable. The format of the elections will be agreed between the Student Union Executive and the nominated College representative who will supervise the voting, counting and recording and publicise the outcomes.
- The term of office of the *Executive* shall be from the date of their election until the end of the academic year. The maximum term of office shall be 2 consecutive academic years.
- In the event of a tie in the election of the President a re-vote will take place.

SCHEDULE 3 - GENERAL MEETINGS

- The Annual General Meeting shall take place in the spring term, no later than the last week in March. Any other general meeting shall be termed an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting.
- An extra-ordinary general meeting must be held within 7 College days after the receipt by the Secretary of the *Student Union* at the written request of any of the following:-

a) The President

b) The majority of the Executive Committee

c) Ten full members of the *Student Union*

d) Proposer and seconder of 'vote of no-confidence'

- Such a meeting shall discuss only that business for which it was called, which must be specified in a written request.
- All proposed amendments to the Constitution must be posted fifteen College days before the Annual General Meeting.
- The quorum for the Annual meetings shall be 30 members of the *Student Union*, and for extraordinary general meetings at least 50% of the *Executive* members.
- All members of the Student Union present at these meetings are entitled to vote.

SCHEDULE 4 - STANDING ORDERS FOR MEETINGS OF THE *Student Union*

- The business of *Student Union* meetings shall be taken in the following order:

a) Minutes of the previous meeting

b) Matters arising

c) Reports, statements and motions submitted

d) Any other business.

- The President shall take the chair at all meetings. If he/she is absent or relinquishes the chair, it shall be taken by a member of the *Executive*. The Chairperson shall be responsible for keeping order at the meeting. He/she shall not otherwise take part in the debate. When the Chairperson speaks all the other members shall be silent.
- Each member has one vote. In the event of a tie the chairperson shall have the casting vote.
- No vote shall be recorded on behalf of any members not present.
- Every motion shall have a proposer and seconder. The proposer shall move the motion and it shall thereafter be open to discussion and may be withdrawn only with the consent of the meeting. .
- In the event of any situation arising not being covered in this schedule then the Chairperson shall rule on the procedure to be adopted.

SCHEDULE 5 - FINANCE OF THE *Student Union*

- The Treasurer shall be responsible to the *Student Union* for the keeping of accounts and shall exercise supervision over all the *Student Union* finances subject to the decisions of the *Student Union Executive*.
- Annual income will comprise an annual grant based on student enrolments by the College upon application together with additional income raised through *Student Union* activities The grant payable by the College will be made after due consideration of satisfactorily audited accounts for the preceding year, as well as a clearly itemised budget for the next year
- The *Student Union* shall hold a bank account in the name of the *Student Union*. Cheques shall be signed by the nominated College representative and any one of the following.

a) The President

b) The Treasurer

The Treasurer shall hold the cheque book and may hold up to £250.00 for petty cash payments. All cash takings should be banked and not used as petty cash.

- The *Student Union Executive* shall control the bank account. All the expenditure shall be authorised by the *Executive* and duly recorded. No legal contracts of expenditure of *Student Union* funds shall be entered into without approval of the *Executive*. Two signatures are required for all such contracts on behalf of the *Student Union*, one being that of the nominated College representative and the other from either the President or the Treasurer.
- The Officers as a body shall have the power to authorise expenditure up to £250.00 providing that such expenditure is ratified by a subsequent *Student Union* Committee meeting.
- The *Student Union Executive* shall present audited accounts to the AGM. The accounts shall be audited by an auditor approved by the College, who may be a member of the College Finance Department, immediately following 31st July each year. These accounts shall be submitted to the College.
- The account shall include details of any subscriptions, fees or donations made to any affiliated external organisations. The names of these organisations shall also be stated.

SCHEDULE 6 - PROCEDURE FOR ALLOCATING RESOURCES

- To enable effective financial planning, the *Executive Committee* shall determine a set of Aims and Objectives for *Student Union* activity for the academic year.
- Any societies or clubs within the *Student Union* shall be entitled to an appropriate allocation of the resources from the *Student Union*.
- For a society or club to be recognized by the *Student Union* it must have a minimum of 6 members. Funds allocated to any society/club must not exceed 2% of the Union's total expenditure.
- On election, the *Executive Committee* shall give consideration to the allocation of a base budget to support the approved activities of any societies or clubs operating within the *Student Union* at their-first meeting (or as soon as possible after this first meeting). The allocation of this budget shall reflect the nature of the activities of the group and the size of the membership. Requests for any additional resources shall be submitted in writing to the *Executive Committee* for consideration. Such requests will be considered in the light of the *Student Union* aims and objectives, nature and supporting argument for the request, and the financial position of the *Student Union*.
- Should the *Student Union* seek additional information in considering the request, a member of the *Executive Committee* will discuss the matter with representatives of the society or club and may consult with the nominated College representative and report back to the *Executive Committee* within 2 weeks. The President will inform the society or club of the outcome of the request for additional resources in writing within 4 weeks. If an appeal is made against the decision of the *Executive Committee* the nominated College representative will arrange for the appeal to be considered by an independent person within 2 weeks.
- All *Student Union* funds and resources must be used only for the benefit of *Student Union* members as students and not to support any political or religious events.

SCHEDULE 7- COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- Any complaints against the Student Union must be put in writing to the Secretary, who will channel the complaint to the appropriate officer. A decision should be received within 2 weeks.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, he/she can appeal against the decision and refer the matter to the nominated College representative. A decision should be received within 2 weeks.

APPENDIX

Regent's College Student Union

CODE OF PRACTICE

1. Constitution

The Regent's College *Student Union* will have a written constitution approved by the College and reviewed by the Executive Committee at intervals of no more than 5 years. Copies of the Constitution are available from the *Student Union*.

Student Union activities will be monitored regularly by the nominated College representative and annual reports will be submitted to the College Corporation Board.

2. Student Rights

The *Student Union* will operate in a fair and democratic manner to represent the interests of enrolled students of Regent's College. Each enrolled student shall be entitled to full membership of and representation by the *Student Union* unless they choose not to. Students who exercise their right to opt out of *Student Union* membership and representation will not be unfairly disadvantaged in any way.

Allocation of funds to student groups or clubs will be made in accordance with Schedule 6 of the *Student Union* Constitution.

A complaints procedure is available to any student who is dissatisfied in their dealings with the *Student Union* or claims they have been unfairly disadvantaged by opting out of *Student Union* membership.

3. Financial Arrangements

The *Student Union* will be accountable for its finances to the College who will approve budget and monitor expenditure. Financial reports will be submitted annually to the College and will be published and made available to students. The report will include details of any donations made by the *Student Union* to external bodies. The Constitution prohibits donation of *Student Union* funds to bodies with political or religious affiliation.

4. Affiliations

The *Student Union* will annually publish details of all affiliations with external organisations. This will include the name of the organisation and details of any subscriptions, fees or donations

5. Charitable Status

Although the *Student Union* is a constitutionally and financially separate body from Regent's College, legal case law suggests that the *Student Union* may share Regent's College's status as an educational charity.

Any funding or resources made available through Regent's College should not be used for any activity other than charitable educational purposes for the direct benefit of its members as students.

The funds and resources of the *Student Union* must be used for broadly educational purposes which may include the social, cultural and general well-being of its members.

The above statements do not preclude specific charitable fund-raising events provided that all donations are declared and they do not conflict with the requirements to remain apolitical as determined by the Constitution.

DESCRIPTION OF ROLES

1. President

The President acts as the figurehead of the Union and oversees all its activities and attends appropriate College meeting such as Senate.

2. Vice President

Supports the President in his/her tasks and takes over the role of President if the postholder is prevented from fulfilling his/her duties.

3. Treasurer

Oversees and controls all matters relating to Student Union finance, eg prepares budgets, controls income and expenditure, reconciles petty cash etc.

4. Secretary

The Secretary ensures that records are stored in an appropriate manner, meetings are properly scheduled and organised and minutes are kept.

5. Specialized Officers, Clubs and Societies

Officers represent their departments, clubs and societies on the *Executive* (where appropriate) and request assistance (financial or otherwise) from the *Student Union*.

Job description for clubs and societies officers should be drawn up by the respective club or society.

Job description for specialized Officers will be provided by the *Student Union Executive Committee*.