

CONSTITUTION

HARVARD AFRICAN STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

We, African students presently studying at Harvard University being,

Aware of the important and positive contributions African students inside and outside the African continent have played in the past towards the development and liberation of Africa

Committed to the total liberation of the entire African continent from direct and indirect forms of imperialism

Convinced that Pan-Africanism and African Solidarity based upon egalitarian principles are essential for the genuine political, social, and economic development of Africa and the progress of people of African descent generally

Cognizant of the need for an African Organization of Harvard University students geared towards uniting, initiating programs of special interest to African students, and contributing to the development and liberation of the African continent and the African mind

Resolved to establish such an organization, hereby form an organization to cater for the special needs of and to mobilize African students at Harvard, and to inform the non-African members of Harvard University and the American public generally of the important events occurring or affecting the African continent with a view to articulating a progressive African position and generating informed support for African liberation and development.

ARTICLES: Article 1: Name of the Organization-Article 2: Principles of the Organization-Article 3: Objectives of the Organization-Article 4: Implementation of Objectives-Article 5: Membership-Article 6: Organization-Article 7: Organs of the Organization-Article 8: Elections- Article 9: Meetings-Article 10: Quorum-Article 11: Interpretation of the Constitution-Article 12: Amendment of the Constitution

Article 1 – NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

The name of the organization shall be Harvard African Students' Association, hereinafter referred to as HASA.

Article 2 -- PRINCIPLES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Subject to Article 6 Section 4

(a) Majority rule shall prevail in all debates, elections, and deliberations, but minority positions shall be respected. To this end, no member of the organization shall be coerced into participating in any activity against the member's will.

(b) There shall be unreserved criticism and self-criticism, and to this end, complete candor and full freedom of speech shall be encouraged and respected.

Article 3 -- OBJECTIVES

(a) To unite undergraduate students studying at Harvard with a view to raising their consciousness of Africa. To provide leadership, organize, and mobilize support on issues affecting or of special interest to Africa.

(b) To forge links with the African students inside and outside of the African continent, African peoples generally, and people with an interest in and commitment to Africa.

(c) To build unity and solidarity, especially with the African Diaspora and other Third World peoples and organizations.

(d) To struggle against racism, ethnic chauvinism, sexism, political, economic, and other forms of oppression.

(e) To educate the general public about the diverse peoples and cultures of Africa and the issues affecting them, to dispel misconceptions about Africa and its people.

(f) To provide a forum for the discussion and debate of matters of special interest to African liberation and development.

(g) To help African students adjust to studying at Harvard and to give them support in

pursuing their educational goals.

(h) To participate in and organize events and activities that help achieve and maintain genuine cultural, economic, and political freedom of the people of Africa.

Article 4 -- IMPLEMENTATION OF OBJECTIVES

The Executive Board shall present a written program for implementing the above objectives to the membership at the first meeting of the fall term, which shall be a General Assembly, per Article 9.

Article 5 -- MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Membership

Membership in this organization shall be open to all students in good standing currently enrolled in Harvard College, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or physical disability.

All officers shall be registered undergraduates in Harvard College.

Membership shall be of two categories: Active membership and Alumni membership.

Any current Harvard University undergraduate student who fulfills the conditions stipulated in Section 2 shall be designated as an Active member of HASA.

Any Harvard University alumnus/alumna who fulfills the conditions stipulated in Section 2 shall be designated as an Alumni member of HASA.

Section 3: Benefits of Membership

Active membership in HASA entitles members to run for elected positions, vote in elections, and have any other special privileges as determined by the HASA board.

Alumni membership in HASA entitles members to attend meetings, participate in discussions, and any other special privileges as determined by the HASA board. Alumni members cannot vote in elections or run for an elected position in HASA.

Article 6 -- ORGANIZATION

Section 1: Officers of the Organization

(a) HASA shall have an Executive Board consisting of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Chair, Political Action Chair, Social Chair, Technology Chair, Alumni Representative, Student Affairs Committee representative, Freshman Representative, and a Political Action Committee chaired by the Political Action Chair and 3 elected officers.

(b) All the officers of HASA shall be elected according to the procedure outlined in Article 9, and shall serve until the next round of general elections at the end of the spring term. But in the event of a vacancy, the Executive Board may appoint the three officials to the Political Action Committee.

(c) All officers of the organization are held subject to the present Article section 4.

Section 2: Duties and Responsibilities of Officers of the Executive Board

(a) **The President**

The President shall be the chief executive of the organization. The President's duties and responsibilities shall include:

(i) The representation of the organization on all public occasions.

(ii) Speaking on behalf of the organization in negotiations and in matters affecting the relationship between HASA and other organizations.

(iii) Making executive decisions on behalf of the organization and the Board in consultation with the Board and membership.

(iv) Convening meetings of the Executive Board to discuss day-to-day business, special events, etc.

(iv) Ensuring that elections are carried out according to the principles outlined in Article 9 and serving as the presiding official of the elections.

(b) **The Vice President**

The Vice President shall act in the absence of the President and shall carry out other duties of the President as may be from time to time assigned to the Vice-Presidency by the President. The duties of the Vice-President shall include:

(i) Chairing of the meetings of the organization.

(ii) Serving as a liaison between the President and the rest of the Executive Board.

(iii) Weekly maintenance of the official HASA e-mail account (harvardasa@gmail.com) and relaying the relevant information to the Executive Board and general membership.

(c) The Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of membership and minutes of Executive Board meetings and general meetings:

(i) The maintenance of up-to-date records, documents, and minutes of the proceedings and meetings of HASA and its Executive Board.

(ii) Assisting the treasurer in the preparation of grant applications for the Student Affairs Committee.

(d) The Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be the chief financial and budgeting manager of HASA. The Treasurer's duties shall include:

(i) The maintenance of up-to-date accounts of the organization's financial transactions.

(ii) The establishment and control of the bank accounts and other assets of HASA.

(iii) Securing funding for HASA's various events and activities through grants and other funding sources.

(e) Publicity Chair

The Publicity Chair shall be the chief liaison, information, and public-relations officer of HASA and shall also be in charge of all aspects of the gathering and dissemination of information. The Publicity Chair's duties shall include:

(i) The formulation of mass-media releases.

(ii) The editing of the organization's publications.

(iii) The announcement and publicizing of the activities of the organization.

(ii) The issuance of notices to meetings and circulars and the distribution of agendas for meetings.

(f) Political Action Chair

The Political Action Chair shall be responsible for all the political aspects of the activities and events participated in by HASA. The Political Action Chair's duties shall include:

(i) Heading the HASA Political Action Committee (see Article 7, section 2)

1. Calling meetings of the committee as s/he deems fit and encouraging membership participation in said committee.
2. Coordinating between the committee and the Executive Board.
3. Keeping the HASA membership informed of events and issues of political interest to Africa, and coordinating with the publicity chair to inform the broader Harvard community of events and issues of political interest to Africa.
4. Developing a general political action plan for HASA and presenting it to the board and membership, and developing specific political action plans for crises and other circumstances requiring the acute attention of the organization.

(ii) Coordinating with representatives from other organizations to plan events and organize students around issues of importance to Africa and the Diaspora.

(iii) Organizing the political action of the HASA membership and incorporating input from the membership into future political action.

(g) Social Chair

The Social Chair shall be responsible for all the social aspects of the activities and events held by HASA and the overall social health of the organization. The Social Chair's duties shall include:

(i) The organization of cultural and sporting activities, including but not limited to shows, sports, films, lectures, dinners, and parties designed to enhance and develop the cohesion of the HASA community. In addition, they will be in charge of running the Weekly African Dinner Table and Study Breaks!

(ii) Working with the Freshman representative to welcome all interested members of the Freshman class to HASA.

(iii) Assisting HASA members with the adjustment to studying at Harvard and providing a safe, welcoming, and enjoyable social space for HASA members.

(h) Development Chair & Alumni Representative

The Development Chair & Alumni Representative shall be responsible for maintaining the connection between the active HASA membership and the alumni membership. Duties shall include:

- (i) Serving as the link between HASA and the Harvard African Students' Alumni Network.
- (ii) Coordinating with HASAN, and planning events such as reunions, conferences, career panels, etc., as s/he sees fit.
- (iii) Organizing HASA alumni reunions

(I) Freshman representative(s)

The Freshman representative shall be elected in the first semester according to the procedure outlined in Article 8. The Freshman representative shall be responsible for welcoming and integrating all interested members of the freshman class into HASA. The responsibilities of the freshman representative shall include:

- (i) Encouraging interested members of the Freshman class to attend HASA meetings and events.
- (ii) Assisting the Publicity Chairperson in ensuring that freshmen are aware of HASA activities.
- (iii) Working with the Social Chair to establish mentorship programs and other activities to foster relationship building between freshmen and upperclassmen.

(J) Technology Chair

The Technology Chair shall be responsible for providing the organization with the web and technical support required to fulfill its objectives. The Technology Chair's duties shall include:

- (i) Updating and maintaining the HASA website
- (ii) Administering the HASA email list
- (iii) Providing any necessary technical support for HASA events and meetings (A/V equipment, videoconferencing, etc.)

Section 3: Duties and Responsibilities of Officers of the Political Action Committee

The Political Action Committee shall have 3 officers elected or appointed by the board per Section 1(b) of this Article. These officers shall assist the Political Action Chair in carrying out his/her duties as described in this article Section 2(f) and fulfilling the objectives of the political action committee as described in Article 7 Section 2. Officers of the Political Action Committee shall:

- (i) Along with the Political Action Chair, devise a structure for the Committee and present it to the general membership within one month of the first HASA meeting of the new school year.
- (ii) Present monthly updates on their current activities at general meetings.
- (iii) Coordinate with other student groups involved or interested in topics, issues, and programs of political significance to Africa and Africans.

Section 4: Discipline

(a) Members of HASA, in pursuit of the objectives and in accordance with the principles of the organization, solemnly affirm and declare that they shall fulfill their duties and participate in the activities of the organization in such a manner as will positively contribute towards the realization of its objectives.

(b) Subject to the provisions of Article 2, elected officials may be censured for who deviate from the principles of HASA or fail to abide by the constitution of the organization and to implement the decisions of the organization shall face disciplinary action, including removal from office, and restitution of embezzled funds or stolen assets.

Section 4: Hazing, Organizing or participating; Hazing Defined

- a) Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one, [sic] year, or both such fine and imprisonment. The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to

extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Section 5: Failure To Report Hazing

- a) Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

Article 7 -- ORGANS OF THE ORGANIZATION

The organization shall consist of the following organs: the Executive Board, the Political Action Committee, and the General Membership.

Section 1: The Executive Board

The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Chair, Political Action Chair, Social Chair, Technology Chair, Alumni Representative, Student Affairs Committee representative, and Freshman Representative. The President shall convene meetings of the Executive Board as s/he sees fit. The Executive Board will oversee the planning and execution of the organization's meetings, events, and other activities, and will serve as the administrative and decision-making body of the organization. The individual duties of the Executive Board members are defined in Article 6. Active and Alumni members of HASA may attend meetings of the Executive Board when invited by the President or Vice-President.

Section 2: The Political Action Committee

The Political Action Committee shall consist of the Political Action Chair, three elected officers, and any active members or other interested parties who wish to join. The Political Action Chair and the three elected officials shall organize themselves as they see fit (such as by geopolitical region, issue, or other structure) and present this structure to the general membership within one month of the first HASA meeting of the new school year. The committee shall work in cooperation with the Executive Board to develop, plan, and execute the political vision of the organization. The duties of the Political Action Committee shall include:

- (i) Keeping the HASA membership informed of events and issues of political interest to

Africa, and coordinating with the publicity chair to inform the broader Harvard community of events and issues of political interest to Africa.

(ii) Developing a general political action plan for HASA in conjunction with the board and membership, and developing specific political action plans for crises and other circumstances requiring the acute attention of the organization.

(iii) Presenting their progress in implementing the political action plan to the general membership at least once (1) every month.

Section 3: The General Membership

The General Membership consists of all active members of HASA who are not on the Executive Board or one of the three elected officials of the Political Action Committee. Any member of the General Membership may, however, join the Political Action Committee. The General Membership may (along with the elected and appointed officials of the organization) vote in elections, run for office, call for a special meeting, and attend Executive Board meetings with the consent of the President.

Section 4: The Standing Committees

The Executive Board may appoint Standing Committees at its discretion to carry out specific work of the organization or plan specific events.

Article 8--- ELECTIONS

Section 1: Nomination

(i) Only active members may be nominated or nominate themselves for elected positions as defined in Article 6.

(ii) Alumni members may not nominate or be nominated for the elected positions defined in Article 6

(iv) The Board reserves the right to reject any nomination if the nominee has not attended at least two official events hosted by the organization within the current academic year, or if other relevant considerations arise that may impact their eligibility.

Section 2: Election Procedure

- (i) A quorum is required for elections to be deemed valid.
- (ii) Voting in elections will be conducted by secret ballot
- (iii) The Board must publicize details pertaining to the entire election process. The location, date, and time of elections must be made known to the entire active membership at least one week in advance.
- (iv) Absentee votes from active members will be counted, but only if received before the stated time of the commencement of the election proceedings.
- (v) To be elected to the position being contested, the contestant must obtain a simple majority, that is, more than 50% of the votes cast.
- (vi) In case a simple majority has not been obtained, a run-off vote will be held to determine the winner.

(c) Election Irregularity

- (i) If the Board determines that a member has willfully compromised the integrity of the election process, said member will be subject to disciplinary action per Article 6, Section 4.
- (ii) In the event that a position remains unfilled or becomes vacant, the Board shall hold separate elections for the vacated position following the procedure outlined in the present Article, with the exception of the three elected officials of the Political Action Committee who may be appointed by the Executive Board in the event of vacancy.

Article 9 -- MEETINGS

There shall be four categories of meetings in the organization: The General Assembly, Special Meetings, Regular Meetings, and Executive Meetings.

(a) Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting shall be convened at regular intervals decided upon by the Board, provided that there shall be at least one (1) Regular Meeting every month.

(b) General Assembly

A General Assembly shall be convened at least once a year between April and June and shall be attended by all the members of HASA. The business to be transacted by the General Assembly may include:

(i) The presentation of reports by the officers of HASA concerning the work done by the organization in the past year for discussion by the Assembly.

(ii) Amendment or interpretation of the Constitution

(c) Elections

The Executive Board shall call a meeting for the election of officers at least once (1) a year.

(c) Special Meeting

A Special Meeting of the organization shall be convened to discuss any issue and to make binding decisions thereon under the following three circumstances:

(i) When the President issues a notice for a Special Meeting to all members of the organization.

(ii) When the President, upon request by at least ten (10) members of the organization, convenes a Special Meeting by notice to all members of the organization.

(iii) When ten (10) members of the organization, upon refusal or delay by the President to convene a Special Meeting requested by them, issue their own independent notice to all members of the organization convening the same.

In all three types of Special Meetings, the notice shall specify who has requested the Special Meeting and shall outline the agenda for the meeting.

(d) Executive Meeting

The Executive Meetings shall be convened by the President of the organization at any time to discuss matters of the day-to-day running of the organization.

Article 10 -- QUORUM

Where required, a quorum shall be defined as at least twice the size of the current Executive Board. Where required, a simple majority is at least fifty (50) percent.

Article 11 -- INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Any question which may arise concerning the interpretation of this Constitution shall be

decided by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) majority of Active Members present at the General Assembly, Executive, or Special Meeting called for this purpose.

Article 12 -- AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

Amendment to this constitution or the repeal thereof shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of active members present at a special meeting called for such a purpose.