

# University of Alberta Atheists and Agnostics

## Official Constitution

Created by Ian Bushfield, 4 July 2007  
Revised by Committee, January 10, 2008

## Article 1. Name and Mission

1. This organization is named the “University of Alberta Atheists and Agnostics,” hereinafter abbreviated to “UAAA.”
2. The mission of the UAAA is to
  - (a) Provide a community for atheists, agnostics, humanists, sceptics, naturalists, and other freethinkers;
  - (b) Foster the acceptance of atheists, agnostics, humanists, and other freethinkers;
  - (c) Foster ethical and moral attitudes based on secular humanism and rationality as opposed to revelation;
  - (d) Advocate for the separation of church and state;
  - (e) Promote the scientific method as the best known means of examining the universe and the place of humanity within it;
  - (f) Promote sceptical inquiry and critical thinking;
  - (g) Organize public functions related to Article 1.2. (a)-(f).
3. The following organizations are recognized as affiliates of the UAAA:
  - (a) Freethought Association of Canada;
  - (b) Secular Student Alliance;
  - (c) Centre For Inquiry-On Campus.

## Article 2. Membership

1. Membership in the UAAA is open to all sentient beings, regardless of species, race, colour, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, age, handicap, veteran status, etc.
2. Membership
  - (a) Entitles the holder to full voting privileges, including the right to abstain from voting;
  - (b) Initiates when the interested person notifies an executive member of his or her interest in joining the UAAA.
3. Members are expected to obey the following code of conduct:
  - (a) Members are acting as representatives of the UAAA while attending events hosted or promoted by the UAAA, advertising the UAAA, or participating in online forums administered or affiliated with the UAAA.
  - (b) While representing the UAAA, in accordance with Article 2.3. (a), members shall:
    - (i) Be reasonably knowledgeable about potential topics of debate, including: atheist ethics, arguments for atheism, intelligent design, etc.;
    - (ii) Act in groups of two or more to deter potential acts verbal or physical abuse;
    - (iii) Not act in a way that may reflect poorly on the UAAA and its membership. This includes, but is not limited to, vandalism, shouting matches, verbal and physical abuse, and anything else deemed illegal by the University of Alberta, City of Edmonton, or the governments of Alberta or Canada;
    - (iv) Not discriminate against any individuals for reasons of race, colour, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, age, handicap, veteran status, etc.
4. A person’s membership terminates upon
  - (a) His or her submission of a request to leave the UAAA to an executive officer;
  - (b) The end of the winter academic semester, if he or she does not renew membership;

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- (c) Majority vote of the members to expel him or her at a special meeting, in accordance with Article 6.1. (c).
- 5. Members who are expelled per Article 2.4. (c) may not rejoin the UAAA until
  - (a) The beginning of the fall term of the academic year following the academic year of their expulsion; and
  - (b) Until their request for readmission is approved by an executive member.
- 6. All current members shall have an entry in the membership roster, which shall give details of their names and any contact information they wish to volunteer.

## **Article 3. Executive Officers**

- 1. The executive branch of the UAAA shall be divided into a senior and junior executive.
- 2. The senior executive officers comprise of:
  - (a) The President – responsible for:
    - (i) Organizing and presiding over meetings, activities, and events;
    - (ii) Acting as the official spokesperson for the UAAA;
    - (iii) Ensuring that the letter and spirit of the Constitution is upheld;
    - (iv) Abstain from voting, except in the event of a tie, where the vote of the president shall decide the issue;
    - (v) Exercising absolute discretion in all matters for which a vote is not specifically mandated under Article 9.1. ;
    - (vi) Having co-signing authority over UAAA cheques with either the Vice-President Operations and Finance or Vice-President External.
  - (b) The Vice-President External – responsible for:
    - (i) Assisting the President in any of his or her responsibilities as delegated by the President;
    - (ii) Assuming the responsibilities of the President should he or she be absent;
    - (iii) Registering the UAAA with the Dean of Student Services and the Students' Union before the annual winter deadline;
    - (iv) Acting as a liaison for the UAAA whenever communication with another external organization (from the university, community, affiliates, or media) is necessary;
    - (v) Inviting and thanking speakers who are invited to any UAAA-organized event;
    - (vi) Having co-signing authority over UAAA cheques with either the President or Vice-President Operations and Finance.
  - (c) The Vice-President Operations and Finance – responsible for:
    - (i) Assisting the President in any of his or her responsibilities as delegated by the President;
    - (ii) Keeping an inventory of all UAAA merchandise;
    - (iii) Providing a place where UAAA merchandise can be safely stored;
    - (iv) Preparing a budget, for the following academic term, by the final meeting of the current academic term;
    - (v) Maintaining the membership roster in keeping with Article 2.6. ;
    - (vi) Having co-signing authority over UAAA cheques with either the President or Vice-President External.
  - (d) The Vice-President Internal – responsible for:
    - (i) Assisting the President in any of his or her responsibilities as delegated by the President;
    - (ii) Organizing club functions and fundraising;
    - (iii) Communication of information within the UAAA;
    - (iv) Planning, organizing, and coordinating UAAA functions with the President;
    - (v) Overseeing the recruitment of new members;

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- (vi) Maintaining the files and documents pertaining to the UAAA.
- 3. By majority vote, the senior executive may appoint other members to a junior executive, whose roles must be described in an executive motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (a).
- 4. Should the senior executive decide that the utility of a junior executive office has expired, they may abolish it via an executive motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (a).
- 5. By majority vote, the senior executive may appoint a former executive member to act as a non-voting executive advisor in an executive motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (a).
- 6. An executive officer may resign his or her position by providing notice to the senior executive.
- 7. In the event that an executive vacancy arises under Article 3.6. , the senior executive shall appoint a replacement to the vacancy via a majority vote as quickly as possible.
- 8. No executive officer or appointed advisor shall receive any remuneration for their services.

## **Article 4. Regulations of the Election of Senior Executive Officers**

- 1. All members shall receive advance notice of at least thirty days prior to an election being held.
- 2. The election shall be held at least thirty days prior to the expiration of the winter term.
- 3. A returning officer, who will not be running in the election, shall be appointed by the incumbent senior executive per Article 9.1. (a).
- 4. Eligibility for election is restricted to undergraduate students of the University of Alberta who will be taking full-time studies during their term, pursuant to the regulations of Student Group Services.
- 5. The election shall employ a secret ballot, supervised by the returning officer who shall tally votes.
- 6. Nominations for the executive position will close immediately prior to the voting for that position.
- 7. Nominations may be made by motion, and require another member to second the motion.
- 8. A member must be present at the elections to be nominated, and any member may reject their nomination.
- 9. Senior executive positions shall be voted for independently in order of precedence, as per Article 3.2. .
- 10. Each candidate for a position shall be allowed ninety seconds to give a speech on their platform for the contested position.
- 11. In the event of only one candidate running for a position, a yes or no vote shall be held.
- 12. If that candidate fails to pass, the executive who are elected shall appoint a member to the unclaimed positions by an executive motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (a), as quickly as possible.
- 13. In the event of a tie, all candidates deemed by the returning officer to no longer be in contention shall be stricken from the ballot and the position will be voted for once again. This procedure shall be repeated as many times as necessary to reduce the number of candidates to two. Should this vote also result in a tie, each candidate shall be given another ninety seconds to speak, and then voting shall continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes.
- 14. The elected candidates' terms of office shall commence on the day following the election and shall end on the day of the following election.
- 15. A member may only hold one position at a time.
- 16. A member may hold an executive office for as many terms as they are eligible.

## **Article 5. Impeachment of Executive Officers**

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1. Where a sufficient body of evidence exists to impugn the credibility, competence, or commitment of any of the senior or junior executive officers, the provisions herein may be activated.
2. Any member may submit a complaint regarding an executive officer under Article 5.1. , which must cite evidence to support its contents.
3. Complaints must be submitted to the senior executive, in writing, for review before impeachment proceedings can commence.
4. Should the senior executive decide that the complaint is sufficiently serious to warrant impeachment proceedings, they shall have recourse to these procedures:
  - (a) A hearing will be hosted by the senior executive, in which they will adjudicate on the complaint against the executive officer.
  - (b) The complaint will be read aloud to allow all parties present to have a complete understanding of the complainant's case.
  - (c) The executive officer named shall have the opportunity to respond to the complaint.
  - (d) When all submissions have been considered by the senior executive, they will decide whether the complaint warrants the executive officer's impeachment.
  - (e) In the interests of arriving at a fair decision, the senior executive officers are not obligated to decide on the complaint immediately; their decision is due, at the latest, seven days after the conclusion of the hearing.
  - (f) Throughout these proceedings, the complainant may choose to be named or remain anonymous.
5. If a senior executive officer is impeached, he or she will be replaced as soon as possible by another member appointed by an executive motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (a).
6. If a junior executive officer is impeached, he or she will be replaced as soon as possible by another member appointed by an executive motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (a).

## Article 6. Meetings

1. Three types of meetings characterize the assembly of the UAAA:
  - (a) General meetings,
    - (i) Which must happen at least once per term;
    - (ii) Require prior notice of at least thirty days; and
    - (iii) Are open to all members.
  - (b) Executive meetings,
    - (i) Which are convened at the discretion of the executive,
    - (ii) Require prior notice of at least seven days; and
    - (iii) Are only open to members of the executive and their invited guests.
  - (c) Special meetings,
    - (i) Which are convened by executive officers to address urgent matters;
    - (ii) Require as much prior notice as possible, given the exceptional circumstances that justify a special meeting; and
    - (iii) Are open to all members.
2. Voting may only occur at a meeting that satisfies the criteria listed in Article 6.1. , provided that quorum is present.
3. Notwithstanding Article 11.2. , quorum for a general meeting shall be either
  - (a) One-tenth of the regular membership; or
  - (b) Ten regular members, whichever is greater.
4. Notwithstanding Article 11.2. , quorum for an executive meeting shall be three members of the senior executive.

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5. Meeting minutes shall
  - (a) Be taken at all meetings under Article 6.1. ;
  - (b) Be taken by an appointed member by an executive motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (a);
  - (c) Be made available to members on the UAAA website and in print form within seven days of the meeting.

## **Article 7. Committees**

1. Committees may be formed to consider propositions on any matter affecting the UAAA.
2. The formation of a committee may be suggested by any member.
3. The senior executive is competent to
  - (a) Form and structure committees;
  - (b) Appoint a committee chair from the membership or executive;
  - (c) Request that committees report on their progress; and
  - (d) Dissolve committees.
4. All action taken pursuant to Article 7.3. must be approved by an executive motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (a).

## **Article 8. Finance**

1. UAAA is hereby competent to levy a membership fee.
2. The fee to be charged to the UAAA membership must be approved by a general motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (b).
3. The budget must be approved at least annually at a general meeting described under Article 6.1. (a).
  - (a) Major changes to the budget thereafter require further approval at a subsequent general meeting in accordance with Article 6.1. (a).
4. Disbursement of Funds
  - (a) Any disbursement of funds greater than five hundred dollars (\$500) must be approved by a general motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (b).
  - (b) Any disbursement of funds of five hundred dollars (\$500) or less shall be at the discretion of any executive member subject to subsequent approval by an executive motion pursuant to Article 9.1. (a).
5. A detailed ledger of financial affairs shall be maintained by the Vice-President Operations and Finances and shall be made available to the general membership.
6. The senior executive shall audit the financial records of the UAAA no less than every four months.
7. Any member may audit the financial records through meeting with the Vice-President Operations and Finances.

## **Article 9. Executive and General Motions**

1. The UAAA is competent to pass three types of internally binding legislation:
  - (a) Executive motions,
    - (i) Provides the day-to-day management of the UAAA;
    - (ii) Which need the approval the entire senior executive at an executive meeting in accordance with Article 6.1. (b) to pass;

- (b) General motions,
    - (i) Provides overall direction and structure for the UAAA;
    - (ii) Which need only the approval of a majority of members at a general meeting in accordance with Article 6.1. (a) to pass;
  - (c) Constitutional amendments
    - (i) (discussed in Article 10).
2. Any member may propose an executive or general motion.
  3. The member proposing the motion may decide whether it should be an executive or general motion.
  4. The senior executive retains the authority to classify proposed executive motions as general motions.
  5. A record of all motions, that are described under Article 9.1. , that are passed, shall be kept.

## **Article 10. Constitutional Amendments**

1. Any member may propose a constitutional amendment.
2. A general meeting, in accordance with Article 6.1. (a), convened for the purposes of voting on a constitutional amendment must be preceded by advance notice of at least fourteen days.
3. The following procedure shall be observed at the general meeting:
  - (a) The full text of the proposed amendment shall be read aloud.
  - (b) The names of the members proposing the amendment shall also be read aloud.
  - (c) The members proposing the amendment shall have the opportunity to submit to the members present their reasoning for the amendment.
  - (d) All members present shall have the opportunity to comment on the amendment.
- (e) At the conclusion of the discussion, a general motion shall be made to call for a vote to be taken.
- (f) Members shall indicate their support for or opposition to the proposed amendment by a show of hands.
- (g) A proposed amendment may only be incorporated into the constitution if two-thirds of the attendees approve of it.

## **Article 11. Dissolution**

1. The UAAA may be dissolved by a unanimous vote of all members.
2. A dissolution vote may only be taken at a general meeting, in accordance with Article 6.1. (a), with a quorum of:
  - (a) Three-tenths of the membership; or
  - (b) Fifteen members, whichever is greater.
3. Notwithstanding Article 11.2. , the executive may dissolve the UAAA at an executive meeting, in accordance with Article 6.1. (b), by a unanimous vote of the senior executive, if it is impossible, due to exceptional circumstances, to attract a sufficient number of regular members to satisfy quorum at a dissolution meeting.
4. Notwithstanding Article 11.1. – 3., the UAAA may not dissolve if it is in arrears or there is a positive balance in its bank account.