

Constitution of “Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Students’ Union”

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SIGNATORIES:

I. NAME

- A. The official name of this recognized campus group is “Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Students’ Union”
- B. The acronym or abbreviation of this group is: NMCSU

II. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- A. To better engage with the departmental community on behalf of the student body
- B. To organize and facilitate events such as socials, academic seminars, and movie nights, etc... that promote community values and act as networking gatherings
- C. To promote interaction among the staff, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students in the department
- D. To act as an intermediary between the undergraduate student body and the department
 - 1. *Responsible for relaying student concerns to the Department Chair and the Undergraduate Coordinator*
 - 2. *Represent the undergraduate body on the Undergraduate Academic Council*
- E. To represent its members on the Council of the Arts and Science Students’ Union (ASSU)

III. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership in the group is open to all the University of Toronto members (students, staff, faculty and alumni).
- B. Full-time Arts and Science students registered in an NMC course or enrolled in an NMC program are permitted to run, nominate, and vote in elections and constitutional amendments. The group is open to non-U of T and non-ASSU members; however, these members do not hold the aforementioned rights. Members who are not registered must register with a designated executive by submitting their full name and a valid email address.
- C. There will be no membership fee.
- D. For recognition by the University of Toronto Students’ Union (UTSU), the group must maintain a minimum of 30 members, and a total of 51% of membership must be comprised of 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.

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IV. EXECUTIVE LIST AND DUTIES

- A. The executive council shall be comprised of the core elected officers: a *President (or Co-Chairs)*, a *Secretary*, a *Treasurer*, *The Events Director*, *The Communications and External Relations Manager*, and *The First Year Representative*, who will be elected in March of every year. **Note:** If the First Year Representative is not elected in March, the position may optionally be filled through appointment at the beginning of the following Fall term (i.e., September). If appointed in September, the First Year Representative will not have voting rights, consistent with other non-voting, non-elected, appointed members of the council (i.e., Stream Representatives). The exception to this rule is if a by-election is held and includes the vacancy for First Year Representative, in which case a student may nominate themselves for the position and, if elected, will retain full voting rights.
- B. The executive council shall also include optional appointed positions. These positions will not have voting rights during committee meetings. These may include: the Ancient Stream Representative, the Medieval Stream Representative, and the Modern Stream Representative. It is the prerogative of the President (or Co-Chairs) to determine whether or not any/all of these positions should exist in any given year.
- C. The Journal Editor-in-Chief shall be appointed by the newly elected executive council at the start of its term, following each election cycle. The Editor-in-Chief will be subject to the same rules and regulations as other elected members. Should none of the applicants fit the required specifications, the council may appoint a deputy Editor-in-Chief who shall report directly to the Editor-in-Chief. If deemed necessary by the current executive council, the position of Journal Editor-in-Chief may be shared by two or more individuals serving as Co-Editors-in-Chief.
- D. The Editorial Staff of the NMCSU Journal, including Journal Editors and Typesetter/Layout Editor(s), shall be appointed by the newly appointed Editor-in-Chief or Co-Editors-in-Chief during either the fall or winter term, depending on the needs of the journal. The Editorial Staff shall be subject to the same rules and regulations as other elected members.
- E. In the case of a vacancy occurring on the council, a by-election shall be held at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM). In the intervening time, or if the position is not filled by means of the by-election, the President (or Co-Chairs) may allocate the duties of that position to the members of the council.
- F. Election and by-election meetings must be advertised at least two weeks in advance of the AGM.
- G. Each elected member of the council shall have one vote, and decisions of the council shall be made on the affirmative vote of the majority (minimum: 50% plus one) of members present and voting.
- H. The council shall report on its activities and the activities of the student union at each meeting of the student union upon the request of any member.
- I. The duties of the various elected members of the council shall be as follows:
1. ***The Co-Chairs shall:***
 - i. Oversee the operations, management and success of the group
 - ii. Set the agenda for the year in consultation with the executives
 - iii. Act as liaison between the NMCSU, the NMC Department, the ASSU, the NMCGSA, the UTSU, from the Office of Student Life, and other student organizations.

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- iv. Hold signing officer authority along with the Treasurer for financial purposes, and create the budget
 - v. Preside over board meetings as well as general meetings
 - vi. Oversee the transition of the office to future council members by ensuring the transfer of records, briefing incoming officers on ongoing matters, and supporting a smooth handover of responsibilities.
 - vii. Attend ASSU meetings and appoint members to fill seats at ASSU meetings, as required.
2. ***The Secretary shall:***
- i. Attend all meetings and be a contributing team member
 - ii. Record notes and motions for meetings
 - iii. Organize and notify all members of meetings
 - iv. Regularly remind committee members of outstanding duties
3. ***The Treasurer shall:***
- i. Attend all meetings and be a contributing team member
 - ii. Record all financial transactions of the group and maintain a written record
 - iii. Hold signing officer authority over the NMCSU bank account, along with the Co-Chairs
 - iv. Maintain a budget of income and expenses, along with receipts
 - v. Collect receipts and submit them to ASSU with an expenditure breakdown
 - vi. Update members on the financial position of the group
 - vii. Prepare an annual budget for the group, as well as budgets for specific events
4. ***The Communications and External Relations Manager shall:***
- i. Serve as the primary link between the NMCSU, department members, and external audiences.
 - ii. Attend all meetings and contribute to team decision-making.
 - iii. Work closely with the Journal Editor-in-Chief (or Co-Editors-in-Chief) and the Events Director to ensure coordination and consistent messaging across publications, events, and social media platforms.
 - iv. Assist in drafting and distributing official statements on behalf of the NMCSU in cases of urgent or sensitive matters.
 - v. Regularly promote NMCSU and department-wide events and initiatives while engaging with prospective students and external communities to build connections, strengthen visibility, and expand engagement both within and beyond the department.
5. ***The Events Director shall:***
- i. Attend all meetings and be a contributing team member
 - ii. Oversee and facilitate the organization of events and seminars
 - iii. Ensure that all activities of the club meet the regulations and policies of the University of Toronto
 - iv. Be responsible for any room booking, external reservation, or catering order as required for the event.
6. ***The First Year Representative shall:***
- i. Attend all meetings and be a contributing team member
 - ii. Act as a liaison between first-year students in NMC courses and NMCSU

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- iii. Promote first-year student engagement
- J. The duties of the various non-voting, non-elected, appointed members of the council shall be as follows:
 - 1. ***The Journal Editor-in-Chief (or Co-Editors-in-Chief) shall:***
 - i. Attend meetings as deemed necessary, and be a contributing team member
 - ii. Serve as the publication’s primary leader, responsible for all operations and policies of the annual peer-reviewed undergraduate academic journal.
 - iii. Maintain responsibility for organizing the editorial staff and journal submissions.
 - iv. Be held accountable for delegating tasks to editorial staff members.
 - v. Work closely with the Communications and External Relations Manager to ensure messaging related to the journal is consistent with broader NMCSU communications across publications, events, and social media.
 - 2. ***The Deputy-Editor-in-Chief of the Journal (if present) shall:***
 - i. Attend meetings as deemed necessary, and be a contributing team member
 - ii. Serve as the publication’s secondary leader, responsible for delegated operations and policies of the annual peer-reviewed undergraduate academic journal.
 - 3. ***The Editorial Staff of the NMCSU Journal, including Journal and Typesetter/Layout Editors, shall:***
 - i. Attend meetings and contribute to the production of the journal as required by the Editor-in-Chief or Co-Editors-in-Chief.
 - ii. Assist with reviewing, editing, and preparing submissions for publication.
 - iii. Support layout, typesetting, and other production tasks necessary for the timely completion of the journal.
 - iv. Carry out responsibilities delegated by the Editor-in-Chief or Co-Editors-in-Chief in a timely and professional manner.
 - v. Abide by the journal’s policies, ethical standards, and the regulations of the NMCSU.
 - 4. ***The Three (3) Stream Representatives (Ancient, Medieval, and Modern) shall:***
 - i. Attend meetings as required by the council and/or the demands of the departmental Undergraduate Coordinator.
 - ii. Strive to engage and support undergraduate students in their respective streams on an academic level.
 - iii. Be responsible for the relaying of undergraduate concerns and comments to the appropriate faculty member.

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V. TERMINATION OF COUNCIL AND GENERAL MEMBERS

A. Any elected council member (*the President/Co-Chairs, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Events Coordinator, The Communications and External Relations Manager and/or the First-Year Representative*) 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, such as but not limited to fraud, embezzlement, tyranny, incompetency, harassment or bullying may be given notice of removal. The indicted member shall have the right to defend their actions. A two-thirds (66%) majority vote of the present and voting council members in favour of removal is required. The member retains the right to an appeal before the general membership in an ad hoc AGM, and the majority vote of this meeting’s constituency will serve as the final determining vote on the matter.

B. Any appointed council member [*the Journal Editor-in-Chief, the deputy-Journal-Editor-in-Chief, Editorial Staff (Journal Editor, Typesetter/Layout Editor), the Ancient Stream Representative, the Medieval Stream Representative, the Modern Stream Representative and/or the First Year Representative*], who commits an act negatively affecting the interests of the union and its members such as but not limited to, non-disclosure of a significant or continuing conflict of interest, fraud, embezzlement, tyranny, incompetency, harassment or bullying may be given notice of removal. The indicted member shall have the right to defend their actions. A two-thirds (66%) majority vote of the present and voting council members in favour of removal is required. This vote on the part of the council is the final determining vote regarding the indicted council member’s dismissal. There shall be no further appeals to the council or general NMCSU constituency. Any individual who has harassed, distressed, or financially harmed the Union or its members shall be ineligible to run for office again.

C. If an executive member misses three meetings in a term without a reason, and fails to communicate with the larger union about these absences, they can be removed from the union.

D. The terms ‘*tyranny*,’ ‘*incompetency*,’ and ‘*harassment or bullying*’ are defined as follows:

1.1 Tyranny: When a council member uses their position of authority in a way that imposes control, silences, or unfairly dominates other members. This may include, but is not limited to:

1. Consistently disregarding the input of others.
2. Creating or enforcing unnecessary hierarchies within a body that is meant to operate collaboratively.
3. Using authority to advance personal interests over the collective interest of the NMCSU.

1.2 Incompetency: When a council member’s repeated actions or inactions prevent the effective functioning of the NMCSU. This may include, but is not limited to:

4. Failing to carry out the duties assigned under this constitution.
5. Performing duties in a manner that substantially disrupts the smooth operation of the council.
6. Neglecting to work constructively with other members in support of the group’s goals.

A finding of incompetency shall only be made by a two-thirds (66%) majority vote of the council, excluding the member in question, and should take into account context, effort, and opportunities given to improve.

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1.3 Harassment or Bullying: Any conduct—verbal, written, or physical—that demeans, intimidates, or targets a member in a way that creates a hostile or unsafe environment. This includes, but is not limited to:

7. Personal attacks, insults, or intimidation.
8. Persistent unwanted behaviour, including exclusion or belittlement.
9. Any form of harassment that undermines the dignity, safety, or participation of members.

VI. ELECTIONS

- A. The executive council shall strike the Elections Committee and appoint one (1) Scrutinizer/CRO from the general membership of the department to conduct and hold elections before the last day of classes. The Scrutinizer shall be unbiased in the results of the election and shall be required to disclose any and all conflicts of interest in the election.
- B. The Scrutinizer shall accept nominations only from group members who are full-time Arts and Science students and members of ASSU. Such members are eligible to stand for candidacy of executive positions from the general membership before the beginning of March.
- C. All executive positions must be filled through election. In the event that no candidate runs for a position during the nomination period, a byelection shall be held to fill the vacancy.
- D. The Scrutinizer shall select three (3) election dates before March 30th for the voting period. These dates will be announced in a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to elections dates and must fall on weekdays.
- E. Elections will be held online through a Google Form that the Scrutinizer will moderate. Council members who are running for a position on the executive council shall not look at this form while elections are ongoing.
- F. In preparation for a tie, the Scrutinizer 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, the Scrutinizer shall break the seal and count the ballot in order to break the tie.
- G. After the election is over, the Scrutinizer will count the online ballots. The candidate with the most votes shall be elected to the position. The Scrutinizer shall submit a report of the results of the elections to the Executive Committee and general members.
- H. Registered U of T members may not vote by proxy. Non-U of T members may not nominate or vote in elections. Only ASSU members who have paid any applicable membership fees and have been a member in good standing for 30 days prior to the election dates are eligible to vote.
- I. Term of executive positions shall be from May 1st to April 30th.

VII. FINANCES

- A. 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 Council will vote on expenditures of over \$100.00 by a two-thirds majority (66%) vote at any council meeting.
- B. The council 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

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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 an 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. The group is allowed to charge for goods/merchandise, allowing for a profit in order to cover official group expenditure. All matters pertaining to the pricing of merchandise shall be voted upon by the council using a two-thirds (66%) majority vote.

VIII. MEETINGS

A. Annual General Meetings (AGMs):

1. *The group shall hold general meetings at least twice per year, i.e. once per academic term.*
2. *The Executive Council 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 a two-thirds (66%) majority vote of registered members in attendance for a vote to be cast. The motion with the most votes will be passed.*

B. Executive Meetings:

1. *The executive council shall meet on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, whose date and times are to be set by the combined efforts of the executive council. A quorum for executive meetings shall consist of a simple majority (50% plus one) of the council’s present and voting members, without which no meeting shall be considered valid or decisions binding.*
2. *All Executive Council Meetings shall be conducted according to Robert’s Rules for Parliamentary Procedure. The degree to which the parliamentary procedure is followed is the prerogative of the executive council, though it should be determined prior to the first council meeting in September.*

C. Emergency Meetings:

1. *Any member of the Executive Council may call for an emergency meeting when urgent matters arise that require immediate attention.*
2. *An emergency meeting request may be made verbally or through any reasonable form of communication to the rest of the Executive Council.*
3. *The request must be acknowledged within 24 hours and the meeting scheduled or addressed (e.g., through discussion or vote) within a reasonable timeframe not exceeding five (5) business days.*
4. *Failure to acknowledge or address a legitimate emergency meeting request without reasonable justification may constitute neglect of duty under Section V.*

IX. AMENDMENTS

- A. Any registered ASSU member may propose and vote on amendments to this constitution. The Executive Council will administer the process of having amendments discussed at general meetings.
- B. Constitutional amendments shall require a two-thirds (66%) majority vote to be passed at Annual General Meetings by members in attendance.

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C. The Executive Council shall formally adopt the new constitution and submit the revised constitution to the respective University offices (i.e. Arts and Science Students’ Union, The Office of Student Life, The University of Toronto Students’ Union, etc.) within two (2) weeks of its approval by general members.