

# **African Graduate Student Association Constitution**

## **Article I: Preamble**

We, the African Graduate Student Association (AGSA) members, under Louisiana State University (LSU) rules and regulations, establish this constitution so that our purpose is realized to its fullest extent.

## **Article II: Name**

Name: African Graduate Student Association

The organization will be called the African Graduate Student Association, henceforth called AGSA.

## **Article III: Purpose**

AGSA was established to:

- increase knowledge and provide educational experiences regarding different African cultures (as they relate to students at LSU) between our members, from our members to the broader audience of LSU students and eventually to the general public.
- Create safe and open space for cross-cultural interactions between graduate students of different backgrounds, including but not limited to educational, ethnic, social, racial, and professional backgrounds. These include engaging with the LSU community at large and beyond.

## **Article IV: Basic Policies**

The following are the basic policies of this organization:

- Section 1. The organization shall be non-commercial.
- Section 2. The organization's name and any of its official members shall not be used in connection with a commercial concern.
- Section 3. The organization shall cooperate with Louisiana State University to support the improvement of education in ways that will not interfere with the university's administration.
- Section 4. The organization may cooperate with other organizations and agencies, but persons representing the organization in such matters shall make no commitments that bind the organization.
- Section 5. The organization agrees to abide by all university policies and local, state, and federal laws.

## **Article V: Membership**

- Section 1. Any LSU student, faculty member, or staff member who is a member of the professional organization AGSA and subscribes to the purpose and basic policies of the organization may become a member of this organization, subject only to compliance with the provisions of the constitution.
- Section 2. Active membership is restricted to LSU students.  
Associate membership is restricted to LSU faculty and staff.  
Associate members are non-voting members.
- Section 3. Only active members of the organization shall be eligible to participate in group votes (i.e., elections) or serve in any of its elective or appointive positions. In addition, active members must attend 60% of meetings and events.
- Section 4. The board members of AGSA shall conduct membership enrollment at the start of each school year and track enrollment/active membership throughout the year. New members shall be allowed to enroll anytime during the busy school year.
- Section 5. Active board members will decide if and how they will handle (financial) dues.
- Section 6. In the event this organization becomes inactive, all funds in the treasury shall be donated for a necessary cause after all outstanding debts and claims are paid.

## **Article VI: Officers and Their Election**

- Section 1. To be eligible to be elected to, appointed to, or hold any office or be a standing committee chairperson, the following condition:
- A. Students must be graduate students enrolled as part-time (with at least 6 hours) or full-time at Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge).
  - B. Students must have at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA and be in good academic standing with the university.
  - C. Students must not be on disciplinary probation or deferred suspension, including newly elected officers and continuing officers. Students may continue organizational membership if on disciplinary probation.
  - D. Students must meet all other academic standards established by the student organization and included in the organization's constitution and bylaws.
  - E. Graduate students who are not registered full-time may still hold office in a student organization during the semester they are scheduled to graduate.
- Section 2. The officers of this organization shall be a president, a vice-president, a secretary, at least one treasurer, and an officer.
- Section 3. The Officer's Duties are as follows:
- A. The president shall preside at all meetings of the association and of the executive committee; shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the membership or the

executive committee and shall coordinate the work of the officers and committee so that projects be promoted.

- B. The vice-president shall act as the president's aide and perform the president's duties in the absence or inability of that officer to serve. If the secretary missed meetings, the vice-president shall record the minutes of the meeting.
- C. The secretary shall record the minutes of all organization and executive committee meetings. And shall perform other duties as may be delegated.
- D. The Treasurer shall receive all monies of the organization; shall keep an accurate record of receipts and expenditures; shall pay out local funds in accordance with the approved budget as authorized by the organization.

The treasurer shall present a financial statement at meetings of the organization once a month and at other times when the executive committee requests.

The treasurer's accounts shall be examined annually by an auditor or an auditing committee of not less than three members, who, satisfied that the treasurer's annual report is correct, should sign a statement to that fact at the end of the report. The executive committee shall appoint the auditing committee at least two weeks before the meeting.

- E. The membership chair will be responsible for conducting an enrollment of active members at the beginning of each semester and enrolling any eligible members throughout the year. In addition, they will update all members and officers with Campus Life.
- F. The faculty advisor shall serve as a resource and support mechanism for the officers and members of the organization. Therefore, the faculty advisor should attend regular executive board meetings and other events as necessary.

#### Section 4. Process of Officer Election:

- A. Officers shall be elected by ballot or raise of hands annually at the second to the last regular meeting of the fall semester.
- B. Officers shall assume their official duties at the last week's regular spring semester meeting and shall serve for a term of one year.
- C. A person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office once.

Section 5. There shall be a nominating committee of five (5) members elected by the organization at its second regular meeting. Following the nominating committee's report, nominations may be made from the floor provided that the nominee's consent has been secured.

Section 6. A vacancy occurring in any office shall be filled for the non-expired term by a person elected by a majority vote of the remaining members of the executive committee.

Section 7. Any officer of the AGSA LSU Chapter in violation of the organization's purpose or constitution may be removed from office by the following process:

- A. A written request by at least three members of the organization.
- B. Written notification to the officer of the request, asking the officer to be present at the next meeting and prepared to speak.
- C. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of active members at that meeting or of members in good standing is necessary to remove the officer.

Section 8. An officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the active members constituting a quorum at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose. Any active member shall call for a vote at a regular meeting. However, a vote may not occur less than five days after the recommendation. Active members shall be given written notice of a recall vote no less than five working days before the taking of a vote. An officer may end the recall proceedings by resigning.

A committee chairperson may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board. In addition, the committee chairperson may end the proceedings by resigning.

#### **Article VII: Executive Committee:**

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall consist of the organization's officers and the chairperson of each standing committee.

Section 2. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be to transact necessary business between regular organization meetings and such business as may be referred to by the organization to approve the plans of work of each standing committee chairperson; and to present a report at the regular meeting of the organization.

Section 3. Regular meetings of the Executive Committee shall be on the first Friday of every month during the academic year, the time to be determined by the Executive Committee at its first meeting.

#### **Article VIII: Standing and Special Committees**

Section 1. Standing committees shall be created by the Executive Committee as may be required to promote the objects and interests of the organization. The Executive Committee shall appoint the chairperson of the standing committee. Their terms in office shall be one semester.

Section 2. The chairperson of each standing committee shall present plans of work to the Executive Committee, and no work shall be undertaken without the approval of two-thirds of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall fill any vacancies in the chairpersonship of a standing committee.

Section 3. The vice-president shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee.

### **Article IX: Meetings**

Section 1. Regular meetings of this organization shall be held bi-weekly each month, unless otherwise provided by the organization or Executive Committee by a change of date no less than five (5) business days before the date of the scheduled meeting.

Section 2. At least 51% percent of active members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in any meeting of the organization.

### **Article X: Parliamentary Authority**

The most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the meetings and other activities of the organization in all applicable and attainable matters which are not inconsistent with this constitution (and its bylaws).

### **Article XI: Amendments**

Section 1. The constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the organization by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given at the previous meeting and that the proposed amendment shall be subject to the approval of Campus Life.

Section 2. A committee may be appointed to submit a revised constitution for the existing constitution only by a majority vote at an association meeting or by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee. The requirements for adopting a revised constitution shall be the same for an amendment.

### **Article XII: Annual Requirements**

The organization will update officer and advisor information on the Student Organization Community on an annual basis no later than two weeks after new officer elections are held and will comply with the Campus Life Annual Requirements Policy (Policy 1, Student Organization Policy Manual) to remain active.

### **Article XIII: Bylaws**

AGSA may adopt such bylaws as are necessary and proper for the efficient management and maintenance of the association. Nothing contained in the bylaws shall be inconsistent with this constitution's provisions and LSU regulations governing student associations.

## **Article XIV: Appeals and Due Process**

### **Section 1. Removal Process for an Executive Board Member**

- A. The president has the authority to terminate any officer position upon repeated dereliction of duty using the process as follows:
  - I. The negligent executive board member must be put on notice of their dereliction of duty.
  - II. The president must give expectations for correction of the problem as well as a reasonable date for expected improvement.
  - III. If said expected improvement is not met, the president may terminate the Executive Board member and appoint another in their place.
  - IV. In severe neglect of duty by any officer, the president must terminate the guilty party immediately and appoint a replacement if deemed necessary.
    - This termination process may or may not include the executive board member being put on notice of their dereliction of duty.
- B. The term of office of an elected official may be terminated by impeachment during the fall or spring semesters for failure to maintain their responsibilities and qualifications as specified in this constitution.
  - I. The president will oversee all impeachment proceedings unless the president is being impeached. In this case, the proceedings will be chaired by gavel order, so long as that executive board member is also not under review for being removed from their position.
  - II. Formal charges must be filed to the General Assembly at a regularly scheduled meeting. Charges must be formal, specific, and written, including a petition of support from an absolute majority of the voting members of the General Assembly.
  - III. The impeachment vote will be held at a special meeting immediately following the subsequent regularly scheduled General Assembly meeting. Only voting members and other allowable personnel per the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order will attend the special meeting. If the impeachment is ratified by an absolute two-thirds vote of the voting members of the General Assembly, the official will be dismissed.
- C. If the President or Vice President critically violates the terms set forth by the constitution in such a manner that is detrimental to the organization when the General Assembly is not in session, the following process will occur.

- I. The individual's behavior may then be brought to and reviewed by a committee consisting of the following members:
    - a. The organization advisor
    - b. Any executive board members who are not under review, if applicable.
  - II. The committee will interview the President or Vice President who violates the terms set forth by the constitution.
    - a. The alleged board member will have the chance to present any additional documentation
    - b. The alleged board member retains the right to an advisor during the meeting.
  - III. Upon conclusion of the meeting, the committee will deliberate and vote on whether the board member should be removed or not
    - a. The vote must deliver an absolute majority to proceed with termination.
    - b. The final decision must be delivered in writing to the alleged board member within ten business days of the initial meeting.
- D. Suppose an executive board member is removed from office during their current term due to termination, impeachment, or removal due to non-GPA-related issues. In that case, they will no longer be eligible for any following academic term.
- I. The terminated executive board member has the right to appeal the decision following the appeals process in Section 2 of this Article.

## Section 2. Appeal Process for an Executive Board Member Removal

- A. If an executive board member who was removed from their position would like to appeal that decision, they must follow this outlined process:
  - I. The appeal request must be submitted in writing to the organization's advisor within five business days of the decision being delivered.
    - a. Said appeal must include identifying who the appealing student is and what decision they are appealing to.
  - II. Upon receiving the request for appeal, the advisor will determine if they can serve as the chairperson for this appeal.
    - a. If necessary, the advisor may recuse themselves from the meeting and appoint a replacement chairperson for the appeal.
  - III. Once the chairperson is determined, the chairperson will select two additional members within the organization to form an appeal committee.
  - IV. The appeal chairperson will schedule an appeal meeting with the removed executive board member within 15 business days of the request for appeal.

- V. The appeal committee will request and receive from the organization any and all documentation regarding the decision for removal.
  - a. If the appeal committee feels it is pertinent, they may interview organization members who may provide additional insight into the removal circumstances.
- VI. During the appeal meeting, the removed executive board member will present their case for appeal, including any documentation they may have for the situation.
  - a. The removed executive board member retains the right to an advisor during the meeting.
- VII. The appeal committee will deliberate and deliver a final decision within ten business days. Said decision will be delivered in writing to the removed executive board member.

#### **Article XV: Code of Ethics**

- Section 1. The ethical conduct and personal behavior of every African Graduate Student Association officer affect the association's image. Therefore, officers of the African Graduate Student Association shall exhibit the highest level of integrity and ethics in all their personal activities and all activities conducted on behalf of the association.
- Section 2. The African Graduate Student Association Code of Ethics shall provide guidance to the officers and members of the association.