



# The Constitution of the English Debating Society

## **PREAMBLE**

WHEREAS it is necessary, in order to further ourselves for the varied duties of life, to cultivate a correct mode of speaking, and to qualify ourselves by practice to express our opinions in a public and correct manner; and

WHEREAS it is necessary to revise and change the rules of conduct governing our Society, the former Constitution having fallen into disuse and obsolescence;

THEREFORE do we in 2018 reaffirm ourselves the UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA ENGLISH DEBATING SOCIETY, and adopt for our government the following Constitution, By-Laws, and Regulations.

## **SECTION ONE: NAME**

This organization shall be known as the UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA ENGLISH DEBATING SOCIETY.

## **SECTION TWO: ARMORIAL BEARINGS**

Arms: Argent; quartered; first, on a branch of maple leaves, a beaver, statant; second, a rose; third, a shamrock; fourth, a thistle, all proper; at the fesse-point, saltire-wise, two trumpets, or.

Crest: On a log, a beaver, statant, both proper.

Supporters: On the dexter, a branch of maple leaves; on the sinister, a branch of laurel leaves, both proper.

Motto: On a belt, or encircling the whole, the motto: "To beaver's care all laurels fare."

## **SECTION THREE: OBJECT**

1. The object of the Society shall be the mental improvement of all connected with it, in the art of debating, in the field of social advancement, and in science, history, literature and general culture.
2. The subjects of discussion shall be any which have received approval of the Executive.
3. The Society shall sponsor a tournament for high schools in the area each year.
4. The Society shall sponsor a tournament for universities each year.
5. The Society shall send debaters to those inter-university debates in which the Executive elects to compete.
6. It shall be the responsibility of Members of the Society to decide on the method by which members will be chosen for tournaments. They may use the Executive, a selection committee, or some other method.



## SECTION FOUR: MEMBERS

1. Membership in the Society shall be open to all students of the University of Ottawa. Membership shall also be open to others, who must be accepted into the Society by a business resolution. These others may not serve on the Executive.
2. All those present at any meeting of the Society shall be deemed Members of the House, and will be entitled to speak.
3. In order for Members of the House to become Members of the Society, they must:
  - i. Officially participate in three rounds of debate, as a debater, at regular meetings.
  - ii. Officially express interest in attending at least one tournament over the course of the year.
  - iii. Participate in an official capacity at a tournament hosted by the English Debating Society (as a judge, swing debater, runner, or member of the organizing committee).
  - iv. These membership requirements shall not be construed as denying the existence of any other requirements or bylaws imposed by the Society.
4. Membership in the Society shall lapse on September 30th of each year, excluding the incoming Executive members.
5. Members of the House shall be entitled to vote on the resolution for any debate. Only Members of the Society may vote on an item of business.
6. It shall be the duty of the Vice-President (Communications) to keep a current roll of the Members of the Society. Only members on this roll are eligible to vote.
7. Each year a Founders' Feast will be held after the last general meeting of the year.

## SECTION FIVE: EXECUTIVE

1. The Society shall be governed by an Executive composed of the following members: a Moderator, a President, a Vice-President (Communications), a Treasurer, a Vice-President (Training), a Chair of Outreach, and a Novice Representative.
2. All of the posts save that of Moderator shall be held by students of the University of Ottawa.
3. The Moderator shall be a Professor of the University appointed by the Rector on the advice of those Deans and Chairmen who support the Society.
4. Should the Executive deem it advisable, other members of the University may be admitted to assist the Executive in their responsibilities. In the event that the Executive appoints members not on the Executive to organize the high school and intervarsity tournaments, these appointments must be presented for ratification at the next regular meeting of the Society. Ratification will require that fifty per cent of the Members of the Society there support the nomination.
5. Should the Moderator deem it advisable, another Professor of the University may be named Assistant Moderator by her or him, admitted to assist the Executive in their responsibilities, and act in her or his place and stead in her or his absence.
6. Elections shall be held each year for each student-held position of the executive.



7. The elected Executive officers shall divide duties among themselves in a manner which seems fitting in light of their offices. Their specific responsibilities shall be:
  - i. President shall preside at all meetings of the Executive, take action to ensure that all members of the Executive discharge their duties, and lead the development of the strategic vision of the club for the year. He or she shall oversee the Society's external relations with other debating organizations. The president must assist with training, recruitment, and outreach.
  - ii. Vice-President (Communications) shall be responsible for all external and internal communications of the Society, including maintaining the Society website, recruitment, tournament organization, and minutes and records, including the current roll of Members, of the Society. They shall aid the President and perform her or his duties in her or his absence, and shall perform all other duties pertaining to her or his office.
  - iii. The Treasurer shall prepare a budget of the upcoming year's expenses and shall present it to the Executive no later than the second week of the fall term. The Treasurer shall keep a written record in which she or he shall account for all expenses and money received by the Society. This record may be inspected by Members of the Society at their request. The Treasurer shall also perform all other duties pertaining to her or his office.
  - iv. Vice-President (Training) shall prepare training initiatives to facilitate the development and competitiveness of the Members of the Society at external tournaments. Vice-President (Training) shall be responsible for all debate-related aspects of the Meetings of the Society.
  - v. The Chair of Outreach shall be responsible for fundraising, promotion on campus, campus presence, and recruitment.
  - vi. Novice Representative shall be a Member of the Society in their first year of membership of the Society and intercollegiate debate. It will be their responsibility to, on occasion, bring pastries.
8. The Executive must adopt a detailed budget of the expenses planned and revenues expected for the upcoming year. This budget will be made available to Members of the Society at their request. The budget must be adopted no later than the fourth week of the fall term.

## **SECTION SIX: ELECTIONS**

1. The annual election of the Officers shall be held in March or April of each year, on a date fixed by the Executive.
2. Only Members of the Society shall be eligible to hold office.
3. Announcements of the election shall be made at all meetings prior to the election.
4. The Chair of the Elections shall be a competent person not formally affiliated with the Society, selected by the Executive.
5. Nominations shall be handed to the Chair of the Elections. Nominations for each position shall close immediately before the election for each position.
6. An individual has the right to dispute whether he or she is entitled to vote, according to the requirements of the Society. If there is such a question about whether a member is entitled to vote, the membership at the election shall decide.



7. The elections shall be by secret ballot.
8. The elections shall be in the following order: President, Vice-President (Training), Treasurer, Vice-President (Communications).
9. The ballots shall be counted in the presence of the Chair of the Elections or her or his delegate, and any member of the Executive not standing for office.
10. In the event that there is only one candidate for a given position, the Membership must acclaim the candidate by a vote of at least fifty per cent of Members of the Society there present.
11. All resignations shall be made in writing and handed to the Vice-President (Communications) at least three weeks prior to the abdication of the duties of their position, unless otherwise deemed appropriate by the Executive.
12. In the case of a vacancy on the Executive, an election shall be held within three meetings to fill that position.
  - a. The Executive may designate a Member of the Society to discharge duties associated with the vacant position on an interim basis.
13. Newly elected officer shall assume their offices on the first day of May of the year of the election.
14. The Rector and the Moderator reserve the right to call for the resignation of any officer of the Society for her or his misconduct or lack of application.
15. In the event that a Member of the Society wishes to call for the impeachment of a member of the Executive, she or he may introduce a motion for debate on the matter at any meeting of the Society.
  - a. If fifty per cent of the members of the Society present wish the matter to be debated, the resolution "(Name of member concerned) should be removed from the EDS Executive" shall be introduced for two person cross-examination style debate, which will normally take place at the next regular meeting of the Society.
  - b. The specific charges must be made publicly at a Society meeting at least one prior to the debate. The Member bringing the charge shall act as Speaker for the Affirmative, and the charged Member as Speaker for the Negative.
  - c. The normal rules of debate shall then be followed, saving only that there shall be but one speaker on each side, that two-thirds of the Members on the Society's membership roll must vote for the resolution in order for it to be carried, and that the Speaker for the Negative shall have the final speech.

## **SECTION SEVEN: MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

1. The Executive shall assemble at least once a month during term, on dates which they shall determine, reserving the right to meet behind closed doors.
2. The majority of the Executive shall constitute a quorum.
3. The Executive must provide, to Members of the Society, notice of such a meeting at least one (1) day prior to the date of the meeting.
4. If the Members cannot come to an agreement, the question shall be put to a vote. In the absence of the Moderator, in the event of a tie, the President shall cast a second tie-breaking vote.



5. The Executive will choose subjects for debate and speakers for the ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the Society.
6. The Executive shall make the minutes from its meetings available to Members of the Society, and endeavour to produce agendas including the times and places of upcoming meetings.
7. If members of the Executive choose to communicate amongst themselves electronically with the purpose of acting on official business of the Society, they shall make those exchanges, or their semblance, available to Members of the Society.

## **SECTION EIGHT: MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY**

1. Meetings will be held at least once a week during term, the days being determined by the Executive.
2. The debates of the Society shall be governed by the rules of debate practiced by the Canadian University Society for Intercollegiate Debate (CUSID). A two-thirds vote of the members of the Society is sufficient to change the Society's adherence to these Rules.
3. The Society may debate both prepared topic and extemporaneous topics. The Vice-President (Training) shall, with the advice of the membership of the Society, attempt to balance the two forms in such a way as to be most beneficial to the Society. Any Member of the Society may suggest topics for debate.
4. In addition to the regular debates, the Executive may arrange declamations, lectures on elocution, other styles of debate, or other innovations which Members of the Society may suggest and which meet with the general approval of the Society.
5. Any Member of the Society may introduce items of business. All items requiring discussion will normally be deferred to the following meeting unless two thirds of the Members of the Society present wish to discuss it immediately, save in the case of Constitutional amendments and impeachment proceedings, which must be deferred to the following meetings.
6. If any Member of the Society wished to object to a decision of the Executive, she or he may request that the decision be reviewed by the Society. If two-thirds of the members of the society agree to the review, the decision shall be open to discussion, and may be overturned by a simple majority.
7. If there is any question about the rules of procedure during the business portion of a meeting, the dispute shall be settled by reference to Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure in Canada.
8. Quorum of meetings of the Society shall be the lesser of fifty percent of the Society's membership roll, or ten Members of the Society.

## **SECTION NINE: FINANCES**

1. All expenses shall be authorized by the Executive.
2. The Executive shall not approve the expenditure of Society funds for activities unrelated to the Object of the Society.



## SECTION TEN: CUSID

1. The Society is a member organization of the Canadian University Society for Intercollegiate Debate (CUSID).
2. The Executive shall, with guidance from the membership of the Society, determine the Society's stance on CUSID affairs.
3. The President, or a person designated by the President, shall be responsible for formally casting the Society's vote on CUSID affairs at official CUSID meetings.

## SECTION ELEVEN: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

1. The Constitution shall not be amended or altered except by a 2/3 vote of members present at a General Meeting of the Society.
2. (*SFUO Clause*) An amendment to the constitution must be approved by the SFUO Clubs Committee, which must be presented with a typed copy of the proposed amendment as well as typed minutes from the meeting when the amendment was passed in order to prove that the amendment was passed.
3. Omnibus amendments, where more than one unrelated section of the constitution is amended or otherwise changed at once with no unifying purpose outside of the fact that they are amendments to the constitution, are permitted. They may be presented only if the membership at the General Meeting of the Society gives unanimous consent to hear the omnibus amendment. Failing this test, the amendments are to be presented individually or bundled according to a unifying purpose other than the fact that they are amendments to the constitution.

## SECTION TWELVE: AGENCY CLAUSE

1. (*SFUO Clause*) The English Debating Society is not an agent of the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa and its views and actions do not represent those of the SFUO.