

Engineering Student Council Constitution

(Last revised: August 30th, 2008)

Preamble

We the students of the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science establish this Engineering Student Council. The Engineering Student Council will strive to represent the interests of the Engineering Students and that of the University as a whole, to improve student life, and to foster communication amongst students, faculty and administrators, and alumni throughout Columbia University.

Article I: Name and Representation

- A. The name of this organization is the Engineering Student Council, thereafter referred to as the "Council."
- B. The Council shall represent and be responsible to all current undergraduate students of the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (FFSEAS).

Article II: Membership

The Council shall be composed of the following members:

- A. Executive Board
 1. The President of the Council
 2. The Vice President, Policy of the Council
 3. The Vice President, Intergroup of the Council
 4. The Vice President, Student Life of the Council
 5. The Secretary of the Council
- B. Two University Senators
- C. The Policy Representatives
 1. The Academic Affairs Representative
 2. The Student Services Representative
 3. The Professional Development Representative
- D. The Inter-Council Liaisons
 1. The Columbia College Student Council Liaison
 2. The Barnard College Student Council (SGA) Liaison
 3. The School of General Studies Student Council Liaison
- E. Class Council
 1. The President of each undergraduate class
 2. The Vice President of each undergraduate class
 3. The two Class Representatives from each undergraduate class
- F. Director of Technology

Article III: Legislative Functions

- A. Resolutions
 1. The Council may pass resolutions to reflect the opinion of the students of the Council to address the various issues facing the student body of FFSEAS and the university as a whole.
 2. A simple majority vote is needed to pass a resolution.
- B. Committees

1. Committees shall address the relevant issues of the FFSEAS student body and the university as a whole.
 2. Standing Committees
 - a. Standing committees include:
 - i. Academic Affairs committee
 - ii. Professional Development committee
 - iii. Student Services committee
 - b. These committees shall be chaired by their respective Policy Representatives.
 3. Ad Hoc Committee¹
 - a. Shall be created by a majority vote.
- C. Funding
1. Work to distribute all available moneys appropriately by considering both the needs of the activities and the service these activities provide to the FFSEAS students at large, as specified in the Bylaws.
 2. Co-sponsor activities supporting the interests of the FFSEAS students, as specified in the Bylaws.
- D. Referenda
1. A referendum is defined as a course of action to be voted upon by engineering students to which the council is bound to act upon.
 2. Procedure for Proposal

One of the following criteria must be satisfied for the Proposal of a Referendum

 - a. The Council requires a petition presented by a FFSEAS student and signed by 10% of the fully enrolled FFSEAS student body or 150 students, whichever is greater.
 - b. Upon presentation, the referendum must be ratified by a 2/3 majority vote of the Council.
 3. Procedure for Implementation
 - a. If proposed less than two months prior to the Council's general election, the referendum shall be included in the general election's vote.
 - b. If proposed any other time, the referendum shall be presented to the students within three weeks of the Council's approval.
 - c. No referendum may be proposed and voted upon by the public more than once every two semesters.
 - d. No referendum may be proposed to the council more than once every semester.
 4. Procedure for Ratification
 - a. Greater than fifty percent (50%) of the fully enrolled FFSEAS student body must vote yea or nay on the referendum.
 - b. A 2/3 majority vote is needed to pass the referendum.
- E. Statements of the Council
1. A "Statement of the Council" is defined as a publicly released statement that for all intents and purposes is the voice of the council as a whole
 2. Procedure for Proposal
 - a. Once someone proposes that a statement be written, a majority vote of all sitting council members to mandate an ad hoc statement writing committee.

¹ *Ad Hoc Committee* – for the specified purpose to address an issue that is not already covered by any other position or standing committee on the Council.

- b. The Council will conduct a majority vote to issue guidelines on the content of the statement to be written by the ad hoc committee
- 3. Process for voting
 - a. A 2/3 majority vote is required to pass a Statement of the Council.
 - b. If time permit, a statement shall be reviewed at a general body meeting of the council. Changes to the statement draft should be passed by a majority vote of all sitting council members.
 - c. If the Council feels the vote on a statement cannot wait for the next general body meeting, the ad hoc committee should email a version to all members of the council. At least twenty-four hours shall be allowed for suggestions to be made. At that time, a final version shall be sent to all council members for a vote. Email based voting shall be sent to both the President and the Secretary of the Council to provide for a secondary count.
 - d. If the proposed statement by the ad hoc committee receives approval between a simple majority and a super majority, the ad hoc committee will review the statement and the council will vote one last time (total of two possible votes on statements from the specific ad hoc committee).
- 4. Procedure for Implementation
 - a. Once a statement has been passed by the council, it shall be distributed to the students of FFSEAS through official modes of communication, then posed on the ESC website, then released to campus media.

Article IV: Executive Board Responsibilities

- A. The President of the Council
 - 1. Chair the meetings of the Council.
 - 2. Be responsible for providing goals and initiatives to the Council in accordance with the interests of the FFSEAS student body.
 - 3. Supervise the appointment of all Committee Chairs.
 - 4. Serve as the primary spokesperson and representative of the Council.
 - 5. Have no voting power, save in case of a tie.
 - 6. Be responsible for setting the strategic goals of the Council for the upcoming year, contingent upon presentation to the Council and approval.
 - 7. Reserve the authority to calibrate the formalities of the Council proceedings where s/he deems it appropriate for the Council²
- B. The Vice President, Policy of the Council
 - 1. Oversee all standing and ad hoc committees of the Council, the policy representatives, and all related policy initiatives.
 - 2. Function as the Parliamentarian during moderated caucus³ when established by vote of the Council.
 - 3. Be responsible for bringing the Constitution and Bylaws to the Council for review.

² Note: this power is balanced by Bylaw D.5

³ *Moderated Caucus* – Debate which is moderated by the Parliamentarian to prevent conflicts of speaking time. A speaking lists and limited speaking time for each person is usually implemented. This is as opposed to a free, speaking-out forum-style debate.

4. Be responsible for the upkeep of the Constitution and Bylaws to the Council for review.
 5. Be responsible for the upkeep of the Constitution and Bylaws and be able, upon request, to present these documents to the Council.
- C. The Vice President, Intergroup of the Council
1. See to the correct and proper distribution of funds allocated to the governing boards of student activities, and for co-sponsorship with groups and activities approved by the Council.
 2. Supervise the transactions of all Council accounts, be responsible for an accounting of all Council expenditures and be able to present a budget to the Council upon request.
 3. Chair the Co-Sponsorship Committee.
 4. Represent the Council on all governing/funding boards' and student organizations' matters on campus.
 5. Be responsible for the upkeep of the Engineering Student Council Partnership Network and the appointed chair, if necessary.
- D. The Vice President, Student Life of the Council
1. Conduct all correspondence for the Council as necessary.
 2. Be responsible for communicating with the general media regarding all council initiatives and events
 3. Be the primary programmer of school-wide events.
 4. Coordinate with the Class Councils for programming purposes.
 5. Be responsible for Engineering Weeks and the appointed chair, if necessary.
- E. The Secretary of the Council
1. Keep complete and accurate records including attendance and resolutions of all Council and Executive Board meetings and present such records to the Council upon request.
 2. Give adequate notification of all Council meetings to all its members.
 3. Develop an agenda and schedule all meetings of the Council.
 4. Be responsible for distributing a copy of this Constitution and a review of Robert's Rules of Order to all newly elected members.
 5. Be responsible for maintaining records of Council activity
 6. Serve as Elections Secretary
 7. Be responsible for the Council Bulletin Board and other publications.

Article V: Member Responsibilities

- A. The University Senators
1. Represent the interests of the FFSEAS student body in the University Senate.
 2. Perform all duties outlined by the University Senate.
 3. Act as the liaisons to the Council for all actions of the Senate.
 4. Be responsible for reporting progress to the Executive Board of the Council.
 5. Serve and be active on a Policy Committee, as deemed appropriate by the Vice President, Policy.
 6. Keep the Vice President, Policy updated and informed on all policy-related events in the Senate that have an effect on students in FFSEAS.
- B. The Academic Affairs Representative
1. Sit on the Committee on Instruction for FFSEAS.

2. Act as the liaison between the Council, students, and the administration on all issues concerning academics.
 3. Chair the Academic Affairs committee.
 4. Be responsible for reporting progress to the Executive Board of the Council.
 5. Be responsible to solicit feedback from the student body with regards to academic affairs and report the obtained information to the Council.
 6. Be responsible for maintaining and seeking adequate representation on their standing committees.
- C. The Professional Development and Alumni Affairs Representative
1. Act as the liaison between the Council, the various FFSEAS pre-professional organizations, and the Center for Career Education.
 2. Act as the liaison between the Council and all Alumni organizations (Columbia Engineering School Alumni Association, Columbia Club, etc.) on issues concerning the student body.
 3. Chair the Professional Development and Alumni Affairs committee
 4. Be responsible for reporting progress to the Executive Board of the Council
 5. Be responsible to solicit feedback from the student body on a bi0semester basis and report the obtained information to the Council.
 6. Be responsible for maintaining and seeking adequate representation on their standing committees
- D. The Student Services Representative
1. Act as the liaison between the Council, students, and the administration on all issues concerning student services.
 2. Represent the Council on matters involving the Housing Advisory, Dining Advisory, and Health Services Advisory Committees.
 3. Chair the Student Services committee.
 4. Be responsible for reporting progress to the Executive Board of the Council.
 5. Be responsible to solicit feedback from the student body with regards to student services and report the obtained information to the Council.
 6. Be responsible for maintaining and seeking adequate representation on their standing committees.
- E. The Inter-Council Liaisons
1. Act as the liaisons between the Council and the Student Councils of Columbia College, Barnard College, and the School of General Studies.
 2. Serve and be active on a Policy Committee after informing the Vice President, Policy.
 3. Maintain a relationship with the secretary or liaison officer of the other student councils.
 4. Sit on the Co-Sponsorship Committee.
- F. Class Council
1. The President of each undergraduate class
 - a. Chair weekly Class Council meetings.
 - b. Be responsible for reporting progress in class activities/functions to the Executive Board of the Council.
 - c. The first-year, sophomore, and junior classes will each appoint a class council member to sit on the Co-Sponsorship Committee and will also act as the governing board liaisons on matters pertaining to FFSEAS students as coordinated by the Vice President, Intergroup.

- d. Oversee and remain accountable for all proceedings conducted by their Class Council.
2. The Vice President of each undergraduate class
 - a. Assume the responsibilities of the Class President, if deemed necessary.
 - b. Coordinate events between the other Class Councils.
 - c. Act as an alternate for the Class Representative in case of his/her excused absence from Council meetings.
 - d. First-year, sophomore, and junior class council Vice Presidents must sit on the Student Life Committees.
3. The Class Representatives of each undergraduate class
 - a. Serve as the representative of his/her class in the Council.
 - b. Serve and be active on the Class Council.
 - c. Be responsible for reporting pertinent activities of the governing board meeting.
 - d. One must serve and be active on the Co-Sponsorship Committee, the other on a Policy Committee. An exemption exists for members of the senior class during second semester, detailed in Bylaw C.3
- G. Director of Technology
 1. Oversees all technical and information technology issues pertaining to the council's function.
 2. Responsible for creating and maintaining a web presence that encompasses:
 - a. A development queue that prioritizes all projects in the ESC's timeline;
 - b. Online voting, online discussion forums, and coordination with other councils through online scheduling, collaboration and web development;
 - c. Includes design and oversight of internal and external web-presences for the ESC General Body, class councils and policy committees.
 3. With approval from the Vice President, Student Life, the Director of Technology is empowered to appoint members to the Technology Team where they feel necessary.
 4. The Executive Board retains ultimate authority and discretion over development projects and queue priorities.
 5. The Director of Technology is elected for a two-year term.
 6. The Director of Technology will be elected during the Executive Board elections.

Article VI: Procedural Guidelines

- A. Voting Procedures
 1. Voting members include the following: Vice President, Policy, Vice President, Intergroup; Vice President, Student Life; Secretary; Policy Representatives; Council Liaisons; University Senators; Class Representatives; and quorum⁴ must be achieved in order to vote.
 2. All votes shall be conducted by roll call unless otherwise motioned.
 - a. Abstentions can be cast when a person chooses not to vote.
 3. Definitions

⁴ *Quorum* – completed when 2/3 of the total council membership is present. In order for a vote to be taken, a quorum of members must be present.

- a. A majority is defined when the number of yeas outnumbers the number of nays with 2/3 of the present voting members not abstaining.
 - b. A 2/3 majority is defined when the number of yeas outnumbers the number of nays by a 2 to 1 ratio with 2/3 of the present voting members not abstaining.
4. Reconsiderations
 - a. A motion to reconsider can only be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side and must be seconded by another member who also voted with the prevailing side.
 - b. A motion to reconsider can only be made within twenty-four hours of the decision to be reconsidered.
 - c. A motion to be reconsidered will be passed given a majority vote.
- B. Election Procedures
1. Elections shall occur as specified in the Election Bylaws.
- C. Impeachment⁵ and Removal
1. Grounds for impeachment shall include abusing membership privileges, violating the duties set forth in this Constitution, and violating this Constitution and its Bylaws.
 2. After all parties have been given one week notice and sufficient time to present arguments, a 2/3 majority is needed to impeach a member.
 3. A special committee will be set up to review the impeachment and present the case to the Council at the next meeting, made up of all four class vice presidents and two other members of the Council.
 4. Removal of an impeached member from the Council shall be by a 2/3 majority vote. The vote will be closed and tallied by the President and Vice President, Policy of the Council, unless the vote is to remove one or both of them. In that case, the vote shall be tallied by the Senior Class Council President and Vice President.
- D. Filling Vacancies
1. Executive Board vacancies shall be filled by Executive Board Elections as outlined in the Elections Bylaws. If less than two months of an Executive Board term remains, the position may remain vacant.
 2. Class President vacancies shall be filled by the current Class Vice President. If the Class Vice President declines, or if any other class council member position is vacant, the rest of the Class Council (any of the remaining President, Vice President, and the Class Representatives) along with the two Executive Board members will form a committee to appoint a new Class Council member through an application process, followed by an interview. Majority vote will decide who will be appointed to the vacant position. If in the event that majority or all Class Council members resign, along with the first-year elections, there will be a new election for the Class for which the Secretary will be responsible.
 3. All other position vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the entire Council membership.

⁵ *Impeachment* – To charge and to call to account a member of the council for having committed an act which is willfully against the interests of the Engineering Student Council, FFSEAS, or that of his/her Council role. Debate and voting by the Council after impeaching a member can lead to his/her dismissal from the Council

Article VII: Amendments and Bylaws

A. Amendments

1. All members should be notified of an amendment vote at least one week beforehand. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority after such a notification.
2. Amendments addressing clerical changes in the constitution
 - a. Any errors (limited to spelling and grammatical) in the Constitution or Bylaws may be changed without constitutional review.
 - b. If any governing boards, student councils, or other governing bodies addressed by name in the ESC Constitution or Bylaws receive a name change, their name may be changed within the ESC Constitution without constitutional review.
 - c. Any inconsistencies that result from constitutional changes that occurred in the previous constitutional review can be fixed without a constitutional amendment.
 - d. Any such changes to the Constitution or Bylaws must be submitted to approval by the Executive Board.

B. Bylaws

1. The Bylaws of the Council should be reviewed once a year by the new Council. It is the responsibility of the Vice President, Policy to bring forth the Bylaws for review. If necessary, a committee shall be formed to write any proposed changes. All members shall be notified of a Bylaw vote at least one week beforehand. These Bylaws may be amended by a simple majority after such notification.

- C. Every Class President and Vice President of the Council as well as the Director of Technology can vote on the Constitutional amendments and the Bylaws

Bylaws of the Council

A. Attendance Policy

1. Every member of the Council is required to attend weekly meetings as well as other mandatory events. Council members are expected to show support at council events by attending all school-wide events.
2. If a member will miss a Council meeting (or other mandatory event including school-wide events) he/she must notify the Secretary at least twenty-four hours in advance by a means of the Secretary's choice. If a member fails to follow this procedure, the absence will be unexcused. After a total of three absences or one unexcused absence, the member will be notified by a member of the Executive Board. A council member with more than three total absences or more than one unexcused absence per semester shall be formally reviewed by the Executive Board.

B. Meeting Procedures

1. Scheduling
 - a. The Council shall meet beginning the first full week of classes and shall continue meeting until the last full week of classes on a weekly basis with the exception of University holidays.
2. Reports
 - a. All Executive Board members, Class Presidents, Class Representatives, Senators, Policy Representatives, and Liaisons, and the Director of Technology shall submit written reports prior to a deadline set by the Secretary of the Council.
3. Closed Meetings
 - a. A majority vote is needed to close the meeting.
 - b. Only members of the Council will be present in a closed meeting

C. Class Councils

1. The junior and senior class councils will appoint a 3/2 transfer representative as a class council member in order to actively engage in 3/2 transfer participation and communication
2. While the senior class Vice President is not required to sit on the Student Life Committee, the senior class council is responsible for appointing a representative from the senior class council to the Student Life Committee.
3. While all senior class representatives should attend committee meetings during the first semester, during the second semester, they are excused from attending standing committees referenced in Constitution Article V.F.3 unless otherwise asked by committee to offer insight upon issues or ideas.
4. It is the responsibility of each class council to maintain proper event documentation to foster yearly transitions.

D. Motion/Voting

1. A motion can be made at any time during discussion.
2. At anytime, a member can move to vote. To proceed to a vote, the motion must be seconded by a council member.
3. A member may offer a friendly amendment and it may be accepted by the member making the motion.
4. If a friendly amendment is not accepted by the member making the motion, an amendment may be offered and voted upon.

5. If a significant issue arises, where members of the Council desire to temporarily change Council formalities or direction from the President of the Council, an absolute majority (yeas outnumber all other votes) may be used to instate such changes.

E. Co-Sponsorship Guidelines

1. Co-sponsorship entails the support (whether monetary or not) of an event another organization is planning. When allocating funds for co-sponsorship, the Council's primary focus should be the importance of the event to the FFSEAS community. Of a somewhat second concern should be the Columbia University community at large.
2. When an organization is seeking co-sponsorship, the following will be the minimum that must be submitted to the Council for co-sponsorship consideration:
 - a. Line item of every expense.
 - b. Detailed description of every expense.
 - c. Sources of income for the event (including a list of campus organizations and other outside sources sought for co-sponsorship and the amount sought).
 - d. Amount sought from the Council.
 - e. The importance of the Council supporting this event.
 - i. How will the engineering community benefit from the event?
 - ii. How will the event be advertised to the engineering community?
3. The Co-Sponsorship Committee will review the proposed co-sponsorship and, with a simple majority, will approve the co-sponsorship.
4. An organization requesting co-sponsorship should contact the Council in advance and shall be given a copy of the above criteria. This information should be made available to every council member at least three days prior to the meeting at which the co-sponsorship is requested before the Co-Sponsorship Committee. All Council members are allowed to attend the meetings for the Co-Sponsorship Committee to voice their concerns. Each Co-Sponsorship Committee member should heavily consider the amount of FFSEAS participation.
5. It is the sole responsibility of each Co-Sponsorship Committee member to take into consideration the constituency he/she represents when voting.
6. The Co-Sponsorship Committee will consist of the following members.
 - a. Vice President, Intergroup
 - i. Serve as the liaison to the weekly Activities Board at Columbia meetings.
 - b. Three Inter-Council Liaisons
 - c. Three class council representatives: one from each of the Junior, Sophomore, and First-Year class councils.
 - i. Serve as the liaison to the weekly Student Governing Board, Community Impact, Club sports, or Inter-Greek Council meetings. The Vice President, Intergroup shall serve as the liaison to remaining governing board meetings.
7. The Vice President, Intergroup will present the committee's decisions to the Council and the Council must approve the decision by a simple majority vote.

F. Policy Guidelines

1. The Policy Committees on Academic Affairs, Professional Development and Alumni Affairs, and Student Services will hold regular, open meetings during

which concerns and initiatives regarding the student body that fall under their respective affairs will be examined and discussed. The frequency of the meetings shall be agreed upon by the Vice President, Policy and the corresponding Policy Representative.

2. Policy Representatives will communicate with the Vice President, Policy to determine whether joint meetings with CCSC counterparts would prove appropriate.
3. At the discretion of the Vice President, Policy, the three standing committees may be combined into one, joint meeting during which all areas of policy are discussed. A Policy Representative may additionally hold meetings for his/her respective standing committee upon informing the Vice President, Policy.
4. The Vice President, Policy will conduct weekly, closed meetings with the three Policy Representatives.
5. Resolutions, proposals, and other initiatives centered on policy will be presented to the Vice President, Policy and the corresponding Policy Representative prior to presentation at a Council meeting.
6. The following ESC members shall attend one of the three Policy Committees (or joint committee, if instituted):
 - a. Three Inter-Council Liaisons
 - b. Four class council representatives: one from each of the Senior, Junior, Sophomore, and First-Year Class Councils (with the exception for second semester seniors, as referenced in Bylaw C.3).

G. Joint Resolutions

1. The Engineering Student Council, hereafter ESC, may pass joint resolutions with Columbia College Student Council, hereafter CCSC. Joint resolutions are passed as council resolutions in accordance with Article III of the ESC Constitution with the text "This shall be offered as a joint resolution with Columbia College Student Council" appended to the resolution.
2. Resolutions originating from CCSC
 - a. A representative of CCSC will present the resolution to ESC. ESC will then consider, if necessary amend, and approve or reject the resolution.
3. Resolutions originating from ESC
 - a. After ESC passes a resolution to be offered as a joint resolution with CCSC, the author(s) or another person appointed by the President will present the resolution to CCSC for consideration.
4. If the two councils pass identical resolutions, then said resolution, minus the statement offering it as a joint resolution, is a Joint Resolution between CCSC and ESC and will be denoted as such.
5. If the two councils pass similar but not identical resolutions, a committee will be formed of members of the two councils. This committee will work to rectify the differences between the two drafts of the resolution and present a final version to both councils for approval.

H. Funding Guidelines

1. The Council is responsible for allocating funds to the governing boards as deemed necessary and proper.
2. The Council shall be represented in all funding decisions in the following manner.

- a. The Council shall be represented by the out going and incoming Presidents and Vice Presidents, Intergroup during the initial allocation process for the governing boards.
 - b. The Council shall be represented by the Vice President, Intergroup during the appeals process for the governing boards.
 3. The Council shall set allocation and appeals policies in the following manner.
 - a. The Council shall set policies for receiving the governing boards' allocation requests for the following academic year during the spring semester.
 - b. The Council shall set policies for receiving the governing boards' appeals requests for the current academic year during the fall semester.
 4. The funding process shall take place in conjunction with the other undergraduate councils in the following manner.
 - a. The allocation request from the Activities Board at Columbia, Club Sports, Community Impact, and the Intergreek Council shall be received and reviewed in conjunction with the CCSC and the General Studies Student Council, hereafter GSSC.
 - b. The allocation request from the Student Governing Board shall be received and reviewed in conjunction with the CCSC, GSSC, and the Student Government Association of Barnard College.
 - c. In cases where funding decisions are made in conjunction with other student councils, the allocations will be broken down according to the ratio of the student populations of the respective schools, wherever possible.
 5. The Council will vote and approve allocations of funds with a simple majority vote.
- I. Interim Succession of the President of the Council
- In the event the President of the Council is unable to perform his/her duties, the following steps are to be taken to determine the interim President*
1. The member of the Executive Board in the year of highest academic standing will take on the duties.
 2. If multiple members of the Executive Board satisfy the previous requirement, the member who has been elected to the ESC for the most years will take on the duties.
 3. If multiple members of the Executive Board satisfy both previous requirements, the member who held the higher position on Council the previous year will take on the duties.
 4. If multiple members of the Executive Board satisfy all three previous requirements, succession shall be determined by a coin toss.