

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO DEBATE SOCIETY

CONSTITUTION

Ratified: October 24th, 2012
Last Amended: March 30th, 2016

Contents

1.0 DEFINITIONS

1.1 “The Members” refers to all persons who have paid membership fees for that given year and remain in “good standing” with the society as defined under article 5.6.

1.2 “The President” refers to the member who has paid membership fees, is in “good standing” with the society and has been elected in accordance with the regulations outlined in article 13.

1.3 “The Executive” refers to the members who have paid membership fees, are in “good standing” with the club and have been elected in accordance with the regulations outlined in article 13.

1.4 “The University” refers to The University of Western Ontario, in London, Ontario, Canada, its administration and governing student organization: University Students Council (USC).

1.5 “The Canadian university Society for Intercollegiate Debate” refers to the governing body of University level debate in Canada herein called “CUSID”.

1.6 “Novice Debater” refers to any member who has paid membership fees, is in “good standing” with the society, and conforms to the “CUSID” definition of a Novice debater.

1.7 “Cease to operate” means the failure of the society to hold a general meeting for one full year and/or failure to elect new Executive members for one year.

1.8 PROXY VOTES

1.8.1 “Proxy votes” refer to votes for a motion or candidate at a general meeting cast by a member in “good standing” present at that meeting on behalf of another member in “good standing” not present at that meeting.

1.8.2 “Directed proxy votes” refer to proxy votes whereby the aforementioned non-present member decides how his or her vote will be cast.

1.8.3 “Undirected proxy votes” refer to proxy votes whereby the aforementioned non-present member does not decide how his/her vote will be cast, instead delegating that decision to the aforementioned present member casting the vote on his/her behalf.

2.0 NAME

2.1 The Society’s official name is “University of Western Ontario Debate Society”.

2.2 The name may be abbreviated to “UWODS”. No other name will be used in the promotion or representation of the club except for those aforementioned.

3.0 PURPOSE

3.1 The purpose of the UWODS is to facilitate and encourage the acquisition and refining of debating and public speaking skills on the University Campus.

3.2 To field participants in competitive debating and speaking tournaments throughout North America and abroad.

3.3 To represent the University in the Canadian University Society for Intercollegiate Debate.

4.0 AUTHORITY

4.1 The jurisdiction and powers assumed by the Society in this Society's Constitution and any amendments thereto arise from autonomous self-governing authority and do not require the approval of any authority other than that of the Society itself.

4.2 The governing body of the Society is the General Assembly which is responsible for all matters of policy and for government and regulation of the Society.

5.0 MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Both general and Executive membership shall be made available to all and only to students of UWO main campus and its affiliate colleges.

5.2 Membership fees will be set prior to September 1st by the President and Vice-President Finance.

5.3 Membership fees will be approved by the Executive prior to September 1st each year and must pass by majority.

5.4 All members must pay membership fees and register their name, student number, and email prior to attending any meetings, participating in tournaments, holding an Executive position or voting in a general meeting.

5.5 Members must remain “in good standing” as defined below or will have their membership revoked.

5.6 To remain in good standing members must participate in at least 15% of debates held during weekly meetings during each semester.

5.7 All members hold one equally weighted vote in general meetings and society elections.

5.8 Votes for general membership must pass by simple majority of all members present.

5.9 All memberships will expire on August 31st.

6.0 GOVERNMENT

6.1 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

6.1.1 At least one general assembly will be held each semester.

6.1.2 Elections, general votes, constitutional matters must be tabled during general meetings.

- 6.1.3 Three weeks' notice will be given from the Executive for all general meetings.
- 6.1.4 Only paid members in "good standing" may vote in general meetings.
- 6.1.5 Fifty percent of paid membership in "good standing" will constitute quorum.
- 6.1.6 Proxy votes will be permitted.
- 6.1.7 The President shall not hold undirected proxy votes.
- 6.1.8 No member shall hold more than three undirected proxy votes.
- 6.1.9 Agendas for general meetings will be set by the President and must pass the Executive by majority vote.
- 6.1.10 Minutes will be made available to all society members.

7.0 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP

7.1 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

- 7.1.1 The voting members of the Executive shall be:
 - i. President
 - ii. Vice-President, Finance Portfolio
 - iii. Vice-President, Training Portfolio
 - iv. Vice-President, Communications Portfolio
 - v. Vice-President, Logistics Portfolio
 - vi. Two Members-at-Large
- 7.1.2 At least one Member-at-Large shall be a novice debater.
- 7.1.3 The Executive shall be responsible for the administration of the day-to-day affairs of the UWODS in accordance with policy and direction dictated by the General Assembly.
- 7.1.4 During the period between General Assemblies, the Executive is empowered to act for the General Assembly, except in circumstances which, in the opinion of the President, warrant the calling of a special meeting of the General Assembly. All actions taken during this period shall be fully reported at the next meeting of the General Assembly.

7.1.5 The Executive shall accompany all financial transactions and orders of compensation with written documentation.

7.2 NON-EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

- 7.2.1 The non-Executive officer of the UWODS may be the:
- i. University Tournament Director
 - ii. High School Tournament Director

8.0 FINANCE and BANKING

8.1 The administration of the Society's funds shall be in the best interests of the Society and shall be the responsibility of the General Assembly.

8.2 The banking affairs of the UWODS shall be transacted with such banks, or other corporation carrying on a banking business, as the General Assembly may, from time to time, designate by resolution, and all such banking affairs shall be transacted on behalf of the UWODS by such persons as the Society may designate by resolution.

8.3 The UWODS year shall begin on April 1 and end on March 31 of the following year.

9.0 AMENDMENTS

9.1 Proposed amendments to the constitution may be submitted to any member of the Executive upon the announcement of a general meeting.

9.2 The amendment shall be written and disseminated to all membership at least one week prior to the general meeting.

9.3 A motion must be made to hear debate on the amendment at the general meeting.

9.4 Amendments to the constitution must attain a two-thirds majority vote.

9.5 Amendment will take effect immediately upon their passing.

10.0 DISSOLUTION

10.1 Dissolution of the UWODS will require a two thirds majority of all membership in “good standing”.

10.2 Dissolution of the UWODS will require a notification of dissolution signed by the current serving Executive addressed to the University of Western Ontario.

10.3 Any resources financial or otherwise will be given to the University.

10.4 Dissolution will occur if the Society or Executive cease to operate.

11.0 DUTIES of the EXECUTIVE

11.1 ALL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

11.1.1 Shall be a member of the Society throughout his or her term and upon ceasing to be a member of the Society shall cease to hold his or her office.

11.1.2 Shall be primarily concerned to foster, organize and mobilize the participation of the membership.

11.1.3 Shall maintain a file specifically relating to their portfolios that will be useful for their successors to the position.

11.1.4 Shall, upon election, provide the Executive and the office of the Society with up-to-date contact information.

11.1.5 Shall further the long-term interests of the Society.

11.1.6 Shall grant requests made by any Executive member for access to records or information, which will be made available within three business days.

11.1.7 Shall not accept any form of compensation for promoting a third party or its affairs to the general membership.

11.1.8 Shall attend at least one tournament as a judge and at least one tournament in a Pro-Am team during the course of the year, subject to the needs of the Society.

11.2 The President

11.2.1 Will have signing authority for the society's finances and co-sign cheques as necessary.

11.2.2 Will oversee the other Executive members and ensure portfolio fulfilment.

11.2.3 Will chair all general and Executive meetings.

11.2.4 Should the President be unable to chair a meeting the President shall delegate an ad hoc chair.

11.2.5 Will propose meeting agendas to the Executive for final approval.

11.2.6 Will represent the UWODS in CUSID affairs.

11.2.7 Will act as a liaison between the UWODS and the University's Administration.

11.2.8 Will hold a permanent position on the General Tournament Selection Committee (GTSC) as outlined in Section 19.5.

11.2.9 Will submit a report at the end of the year outlining the President's term, and a copy of the year's Executive and general meeting agendas and minutes to the incumbent President.

11.2.10 Will transfer signing authority to the new President when elected.

11.2.11 Will hold voting power at Executive meetings.

11.2.12 Upon the expiration of the President's term, the President may assume the position of "Past President" and sit on the following year's Executive as a non-voting member.

11.3 Vice-President: Training

11.3.1 Will manage and update UWODS training resources.

11.3.2 Will develop and locate additional resource manuals, fact files, articles, and other training resources and disseminate them to society members.

11.3.3 Will coordinate and run in-house seminars and training workshops.

11.3.4 Will instigate and oversee the bidding process for tournaments by giving written notice to the Executive members prior to the bid process and motioning for a vote that must pass by simple majority.

11.3.5 Will hold a permanent position as chair of the GTSC as outlined in Section 19.5.

11.3.6 Will keep an accurate record of UWODS' debaters' performances at all tournaments.

11.3.7 Will coordinate in-house tournaments with the Executive members at large.

11.3.8 Will submit a report at the end of the year outlining the VP training's term.

11.3.9 Will hold voting power at Executive meetings.

11.4 Vice-President: Finance

11.4.1 Will oversee and have signing authority for all society finances and co-sign cheques as necessary.

11.4.2 Will keep up to date records of all financial transactions.

11.4.3 Will distribute a monthly report to all Executive members outlining the monthly financial transactions and attaching a copy of the current ledger and bank statements.

11.4.4 Will set a membership fee prior to September 1st and motion for its passing by the Executive.

11.4.5 Will solely collect membership fees and distribute a membership revenue report to the Executive.

11.4.6 Will work with tournament directors in preparing budgets and bring them to the Executive for approval.

11.4.7 Will approve member expenses submitted within thirty days and reimburse as necessary.

11.4.8 Will send registration fees on behalf of competing teams.

11.4.9 Will be responsible for seeking and securing sponsorship and external funding prior to September 1st and throughout the year.

11.4.10 Will hold a rotating position on the GTSC as outlined in Section 19.5.

11.4.11 Will submit a report at the end of the year outlining the VP Finance's term and attaching a copy of the year's ledger and all bank statements.

11.4.12 Will transfer signing authority to the new VP Finance when elected.

11.4.13 Will hold voting power at Executive meetings.

11.5 Vice-President: Communications

11.5.1 Will keep and maintain a membership list with up to date contact information for all members.

11.5.2 Will send a weekly newsletter to all members with information on upcoming tournaments, meetings, and any notices from the Executive.

11.5.3 Will maintain and update the UWODS' promotional material including but not limited to: the website, social media sites, and posters.

11.5.4 Will act as recording secretary for both Executive and general meetings, see Appendix A for model minutes and agenda.

11.5.5 Will record all motions, votes, and action items.

11.5.6 Will distribute minutes within twenty four hours to all members present and invited.

11.5.7 Will notify the President if unable to temporarily perform duty of recording secretary (if absent for example) so The President can appoint an acting recording secretary.

11.5.8 Will be responsible for organizing club recruitment events.

11.5.9 Will be responsible for organizing public debates and other promotional events.

11.5.10 Will coordinate with other organizations on campus including but not limited to The Leadership Education Program.

11.5.11 Will act as moderator for the UWODS forum on CUSIDnet.

11.5.12 Will set with the approval of the President an agenda for all meetings and email it to all invited members at least twenty four hours prior to the meeting.

11.5.13 Will hold a rotating position on the GTSC as outlined in Section 19.5.

11.5.14 Will submit a report at the end of the year outlining the VP Communication's term and attaching a copy of all meeting minutes and agendas for the year.

11.5.15 Will hold voting power at Executive meetings.

11.6 Vice-President: Logistics

11.6.1 Will have signing authority for society finances.

11.6.2 Will be responsible for booking rooms and venues for all society activities including but not limited to weekly practices and Executive meetings.

11.6.3 Will organize accommodation and transportation for all tournaments.

11.6.4 Will be responsible for UWODS' insurance.

11.6.5 Will assist tournament directors in the operation of in house tournaments.

11.6.6 Will maintain contacts with Western's administration in conjunction with the President.

11.6.7 Will hold a rotating position on the GTSC as outlined in Section 19.5.

11.6.8 Will submit a report at the end of the year outlining the VP Logistics' term.

11.6.9 Will transfer signing authority to the new VP Logistics when elected.

11.6.10 Will hold voting power at Executive meetings.

11.7 Members-at-Large

11.7.1 Will represent the general membership of the club and raise concerns of members to the Executive.

11.7.2 Will organize an internal tournament each semester.

11.7.3 Will hold a rotating position on the GTSC as outlined in Section 19.5.

11.7.4 Will hold voting power at Executive meetings.

12.0 DUTIES of NON-EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

12.1 ALL NON-EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

12.1.1 Shall be a member of the Society throughout his or her term and upon ceasing to be a member of the Society shall cease to hold his or her office.

12.1.2 Shall further the long-term interests of the Society.

12.2 University Tournament Director

12.2.1 Will oversee and manage all aspects of their appointed tournament.

12.2.2 Will establish and appoint an organizing committee of UWODS members.

12.2.3 Will communicate information to CUSID via CUSIDnet.

12.2.4 Will provide weekly reports to the Executive in Executive meetings in the last ten weeks leading up to the tournament.

12.2.5 Will provide preliminary plans and budgets to be approved by the Executive at least two months prior to the tournament.

12.2.6 Will present all financial decisions to the Executive for approval and submit all receipts to the VP finance.

12.2.7 Will submit a report within one week of the tournaments close.

12.2.8 Will attend Executive meetings when invited by the President.

12.2.9 Will not hold voting power at Executive meetings.

12.3 High School Tournament Director

12.3.1 Will oversee and manage all aspects of their appointed tournament.

12.3.2 Will establish and appoint an organizing committee of UWODS members.

12.3.3 Will communicate information to schools via email and the OSDU website.

12.3.4 Will provide weekly reports to the Executive in Executive meetings in the last ten weeks leading up to the tournament.

12.3.5 Will provide preliminary plans and budgets to be approved by the Executive at least two months prior to the tournament.

12.3.6 Will present all financial decisions to the Executive for approval and submit all receipts to the VP Finance.

12.3.7 Will submit a report within one week of the tournaments close.

12.3.8 Will attend Executive meetings when invited by the President.

12.3.9 Will not hold voting power at Executive meetings.

12.4 Past-President

12.4.1 Will attend Executive meetings when invited by the President.

12.4.2 Will not hold voting power at Executive meetings.

13.0 EXECUTIVE ELECTION PROCESS

13.1 The President shall chair the election process.

13.2 The President shall appoint two members to serve as election officers.

13.3 The President may not vote.

13.4 The President shall set the election date and ask for nominations or self-nominations prior to the election date.

13.5 The election date will be prior to April 1st.

13.6 Candidates will be asked to present a speech to general membership up to two minutes followed by a question and answer period lasting no more than ten minutes for each position.

13.7 Each member in “good standing” wishing to vote shall rank in preferential order all, or some, or none of the candidates.

13.8 If no candidate receives a clear majority of first place votes, the candidate with the fewest number of first place ballots shall be eliminated and that candidate’s ballots shall be reassigned to the next highest ranked preference.

13.9 If still no candidate holds a clear majority step 13.8 will be repeated until a candidate is chosen.

13.10 All positions must be elected in this manner on the election date set, except for one Novice-at-large which may be tabled until the first General Meeting held after September 1st.

13.11 The ballots shall be counted by the President and both election officers.

13.12 A recount, or re-vote may be called by either the President or an election officer at their discretion.

13.13 All ballots shall be destroyed by the President immediately following the vote.

13.14 The President and election officers shall not disclose the vote count or rankings, other than the successful candidate to any person.

13.15 The Executive elect shall assume their positions on the 1st of April.

13.16 The new Past-President shall oversee the transition and assure all portfolios are transferred and all reports submitted by April 1st.

13.17 Any candidate for Executive positions who is unable to attend the General Meeting may select a proxy to act in lieu of him/herself and read a message pre-prepared by the absentee candidate.

13.17.1 In such cases, all candidates may submit their platforms to the VP Communications for membership distribution in advance of the General meeting.

13.17.2 Members will have the opportunity to ask specific questions based on the platforms at this time.

13.17.3 Any absentee candidate may also prepare answers to questions that he/she foresees asked at the General Meeting but that have not yet been raised; should one of the questions be asked, the proxy of the absentee candidate shall read the appropriate response.

14.0 APPOINTMENT of NON-EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

14.1 General members must submit a resume and cover letter to the Executive no later than April 3rd.

14.2 The Executive shall interview all applicants. Interviews shall be conducted by the President and at least two other Executive members.

14.3 The Executive shall select non-voting members by majority vote to assume office no later than April 14th.

15.0 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

15.1 ALL EXECUTIVE AND NON-EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

15.1.1 Any Executive member who wishes to resign must submit a letter of resignation to the Executive and submit to the President any society related material within 7 days.

15.1.2 Should a position on the Executive become vacant, the Executive may by majority vote, appoint an interim member to serve until a by-election can be held.

15.1.3 No interim Executive member shall serve longer than one month except where outlined below.

15.1.4 By-elections shall follow the same format and process as general elections.

15.2 Presidential By-Election

15.2.1 Should the President wish to resign, a letter of resignation must be submitted to the Executive and surrender all society related material to the Vice President Finance within 7 days.

15.2.2 Should the President resign, the Executive will nominate and elect via secret ballot an interim President.

15.2.3 An interim President shall serve in office until a general meeting can be held and a new President elected which must happen within 1 month of a President's resignation except if a resignation is given between May 1st and August 31st in which case an election must be held by September 30th.

16.0 RECALL

16.1 Any member of the Executive or non-Executive officer who commits an act that negatively affects the interests of the society and its members, breaches the fundamental purposes of the club, or violates any article of the constitution is subject to recall.

16.2 RECALL of EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

16.2.1 Executive members may be recalled by a 2/3 majority motion at a General Assembly.

16.2.2 A motion for recall must be distributed in the General Assembly Notification.

16.2.3 A motion for recall may not be introduced in new business

16.2.4 The Executive shall notify the member affected by recall within 48 hours of receiving the motion submission.

16.2.5 Nominations for the position vacated by recall will open immediately after a successful recall vote

16.2.6 The position vacated by recall shall be filled according to the appropriate by-election procedures.

16.3 RECALL of NON-EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

16.3.1 Non-Executive officers may be recalled by a majority vote of the Executive.

16.3.2 The Executive shall notify the officer affected by the proposed recall of the motion no later than 48 hours before a vote on the motion.

16.3.3 The Executive shall select non-voting members by majority vote to fill the position vacated by recall no later than one week following recall.

17.0 MEETINGS of the UWODS

17.1 The EXECUTIVE

17.1.1 The Executive shall meet at least once per month.

17.1.2 No person shall hold more than one Executive position concurrently.

17.1.3 All Executive members shall have one equally weighted vote.

17.1.4 All votes called during Executive meetings must pass by simple majority unless otherwise outlined in the constitution.

17.1.5 Five voting members must be present to constitute quorum.

17.1.6 Executive members must notify the President at least two hours in advance of a meeting if they will be absent.

17.1.7 Executive members who are absent more than three times without notice shall be asked to resign.

17.1.8 Any Executive member may call a meeting of the Executive.

17.1.9 Proposed agendas will be distributed by the VP Communications at least twenty four hours prior to the meeting.

17.1.10 Minutes will be made available to all members present.

17.1.11 Only voting Executive members shall be invited to Executive meetings unless a motion is made and passes by majority vote to invite appointed or general members.

17.1.12 Proxy votes may be called via email by the President for urgent matters.

17.1.13 Members shall be given twenty four hours to respond to Proxy votes.

17.2 WEEKLY MEETINGS

17.2.1 The Executive shall set weekly meeting times for general debate practices and training seminars.

17.2.2 All members in “good standing” shall be invited to weekly meetings.

17.2.3 Executive members shall attend all weekly meetings except in cases where a valid reason for absence has been provided to the President. Executive members must notify the President at least two hours in advance of a meeting if they will be absent.

17.2.4 Executive members who are absent more than three times in a semester without notice shall be asked to resign.

18.0 ESTABLISHMENT OF AD HOC COMMITTEES

18.1 Ad Hoc Committees may be established at the will of the President or as projects arise from organizational business.

18.2 Formation of any Ad Hoc Committee will be communicated to all members.

18.3 The President will appoint the Ad Hoc Committees members and may disband the Committee at any time.

18.4 The Committee will be disbanded after one year unless reviewed and reconstituted by the current serving President.

19.0 TOURNAMENT TEAMS SELECTION PROCESS AND FUNDING

19.1 Tournament selection will fall into two categories each with different process: Major and General Tournaments.

19.2 A tournaments classification can be changed by a two thirds vote of the Executive.

19.3 Major Tournament Selection will apply to

- i. World University Debating Championship
- ii. North American Debating Championship
- iii. North American University Debating Championship (NAUDC)
- iv. CUSID National Championship

v. Canadian British Parliamentary Championships

19.4 Major Tournament Teams will be selected by a Major Tournament Selection Committee (MTSC) nominated from the Executive and general membership and voted upon by the Executive.

19.4.1 Members of the MTSC may not submit a bid to compete.

19.4.2 The MTSC must have no less than three members and no more than seven.

19.4.3 Any Executive wishing to make a bid to compete must abstain from voting on the members of the MTSC.

19.4.4 The MTSC shall elect a chair from among themselves.

19.4.5 Any member in “good standing” may submit an application package to the Chair of the MTSC for review.

19.4.6 The Executive shall announce the bidding process and the MTSC to general membership no less than two weeks before the application deadline.

19.4.7 The MTSC shall review all applications and shall take into consideration past results, debating capabilities and club dedication.

19.4.8 The MTSC will reach a decision by majority vote and the chair will communicate the decision to the VP Training who will notify all candidates.

19.4.9 Unsuccessful candidates can appeal the MTSC’s decision by written appeal to the President within twenty four hours of the team announcement.

19.4.10: Any appeals will be reviewed by the Executive who alone have the power to reconvene the MTSC by a two thirds vote. Any Executive who has submitted a bid must abstain from voting on the review.

19.4.11: The Chair will if called re-evaluate any appeals with the MTSC and notify the VP Training of any changes to the team.

19.5 General Tournament Selection will apply to all tournaments attended by the UWODS that are not classified as Major Tournaments in 19.3.

19.6: General Tournament teams will be selected by a General Tournament Selection Committee (GTSC) composed of three members: the President, the VP training, and a third rotating position. The third position will rotate amongst the other voting members of the Executive in the order listed in 7.1.1.

19.6.1: The Chair of the GTSC will be the VP Training.

19.6.2: Any member in “good standing” may submit an application package to the Chair of the GTSC for review.

19.6.3: The Executive shall announce the bidding process to general membership no less than one week before the application deadline.

19.6.4: The GTSC will reach a decision by majority vote and the VP Training will notify all candidates.

19.6.5: Unsuccessful candidates can appeal the GTSC’s decision by written appeal to the VP Training within twenty four hours of the team announcement.

19.6.6: Any appeals will be reviewed by the Executive who alone have the power to reconvene the GTSC by a two thirds vote.

19.6.7: The VP Training will if called re-evaluate any appeals with the GTSC and will notify all candidates of any changes to the team.

19.7 Funding for UWODS teams will be decided at the discretion of the Executive by majority vote based on the recommendations of the VP Finance, Logistics, and Training in accordance with the budget and estimated costs.

19.8 No funding will be granted to teams not made up entirely of UWODS members.

19.9 The Executive will endorse self-funded teams under the UWODS name only by majority vote.

19.10 Funding will include all or any part of tournament registration, accommodation, and/or transportation.

19.11 Debaters selected to attend the World University Debating Championship carry the same duties as members of the Executive as detailed in 11.1.8 and 17.2.3 in regard to attending at least one tournament as a judge, attending at least one tournament in a Pro-Am team and attending weekly meetings.