
THE CONSTITUTION
of the
HARVARD COLLEGE DEMOCRATS

Last amended
OCTOBER, 2009

Preamble

In order to promote a better America, with equality, opportunity, and freedom within a just and strong society, we dedicate ourselves to organizing the participation of Democratic college students at Harvard College. In this mission, we call for full participation of all Harvard students, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, physical handicap, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation.

Understanding the importance of participation in the Democratic Party to the preservation of our values and principles, we, Democratic college students, do hereby associate ourselves and adopt this Constitution as the Harvard College Democrats.

Article 1: Name and Purpose

A. *Name.* The name of this organization shall be the Harvard College Democrats, hereafter referred to in this document as the College Democrats.

B. *Purpose.* The College Democrats pledges itself to support the philosophy and candidates of the Democratic Party. Furthermore, the College Democrats declares its intention to support all efforts to increase the participation of college students in Democratic affairs. To these ends, the College Democrats shall educate and train its members so that they may be better able to:

1. Educate students about the philosophy of the Democratic Party;
2. Assist in the election of local, state, and national Democratic candidates.
3. Affect political change on the local, state, and national level.

Article 2: Membership

A. *Members.* Membership in the College Democrats shall be open to any college student currently enrolled in Harvard College who wishes to be known as a College Democrat and who has the best interests of the College Democrats and the Democratic Party at heart, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, physical handicap, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation.

B. *Members in good standing.* Members in good standing shall be defined as any member, as defined in Article 2 Section A, who has paid their yearly dues; such an amount as determined by the Executive Board.

Article 3: The Executive Board

A. *Composition.* The Executive Board shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Campaigns Chair, Communications Chair, Events Chair, Legislative Chair, Membership Chair, and Political Chair. All positions will be elected once yearly at the General Elections.

B. *Meetings.* The Executive Board shall meet regularly when school is in session. Meetings shall be opened to all interested members. The President, with 2/3 consent of the Executive Board, can close a meeting based on the delicacy of the issues that will be discussed.

C. *Members-at-Large.* The executive board, during the first month after its election, shall appoint Non-Voting Members-at-Large for a one year term. These Members-at-Large will be responsible for a given set of tasks to be determined by the executive board during the application process (e.g. planning of general meetings, faculty dinners, social events, activities fairs, and other events in conjunction with executive board members through participation in committees). The program will be supervised by the Vice-President, and participants will be required to attend a monthly meeting with the President and Vice-President, as well as support the club through participation in most, if not all, club events. Applicants will be evaluated by the President and Vice-President, who will make recommendations to be approved by a majority vote of the executive board. The removal of a Member-at-Large for malfeasance of duties can be initiated by a board member or another Member-at-Large and finalized by a 2/3 majority vote of the executive board.

Article 4. Campaign Subgroups

A. After consulting with the Campaigns Chair, a member-at-large may form a campaign subgroup of the Harvard College Democrats if a majority of the executive board agrees that the following conditions have been met:

1. The purpose of the subgroup is (i) to advocate for a Democratic candidate in a contested primary, or (ii) to advocate for an issue or the passage of legislation.
2. The member-at-large has presented to the Campaigns Chair a plan outlining the group's goals and how it will work to achieve them.
3. The mission of the group shares the spirit and principles of the Democratic party, and can best be carried out through the subgroup model.

B. Authorization of a campaign subgroup does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of a particular candidate, legislation, or position by the Harvard College Democrats.

C. If the purpose of the subgroup is to advocate for a Democratic candidate in a contested primary and that candidate wins the Democratic nomination, the group must reapply for subgroup status in consultation with the Campaigns Chair.

D. Subgroups may apply for, but are not entitled to, funding from the Harvard College Democrats general budget. If more than one subgroup working on the same race applies for funding from the general budget, each group must receive equal funding.

E. The College Democrats Executive Board may dissolve any subgroup by a 2/3 vote if it deems it to be acting in ways contrary to the interest of the Harvard College Democrats as a whole.

Article 5: Organizational Authority

A. Substantive Authority

1. *Definition.* Substantive authority shall be defined as, but not limited to, adopting policy statements and platforms, endorsing candidates in local, state, and national elections, and endorsing local or statewide referenda.
2. *Candidate Endorsements.* The College Democrats shall endorse candidates by a vote of 2/3 of the Executive Board. In races where the College Democrats does not endorse a candidate, the organization shall facilitate the dissemination of information for all Democratic candidates in that race.
3. *Substantive Policy Statements.* Policy statements shall be initiated by a simple majority of the Executive Board. Such statements must then be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Executive Board at the earliest possible time.

Article 6: Duties of the Executive Board Positions

A. All Executive Board members must maintain active involvement in all of the College Democrats activities and endeavors.

B. *Duties of the President.* The President shall:

1. Be the Chief Executive Officer of the College Democrats;
2. Define the agenda of the College Democrats during his or her tenure;
3. Act as the official representative of the College Democrats to other groups and the media;
4. Carry out the mandates, policies, and directives of the Executive Board;
5. Appoint, after approval of 2/3 of the Executive Board, ad-hoc committees and chairpersons of such committees, and House Captains.
6. Preside over all meetings of the College Democrats.
7. Attend meetings of 3 of the 6 standing committees of the Dems, and work with the Chair of each committee to see that they are effective building a strong committee, carrying out their responsibilities, and fitting their committee into the organization.

C. *Duties of the Vice President.* The Vice President shall:

1. Assist the President in the performance of his or her duties; including brainstorming ideas and evaluating the progress of the Executive Board and organization as a whole;
2. Act as President when the President is unable to perform his or her duties;
3. Assume the office of the President upon the President's death, resignation, removal, or inability to perform duties;
4. Take on projects of his or her choosing.
5. Oversee the Member-at-Large program, ensure that the College Democrats recruit and maintain a talented pool of Members-at-Large, and work with the MALs to help them find productive opportunities within the organization.
6. Attend meetings of 3 of the 6 standing committees of the Dems, and work with the Chair of each committee to see that they are effective in building a strong committee, carrying out their responsibilities, and fitting their committee into the organization.

D. *Duties of the Secretary.* The Secretary shall:

1. In consultation with the President and Vice-President, appoint a webmaster or web team, and work with him/her/them to maintain the College Democrats web presence, email lists, and design consistency.
2. Take minutes, or ensure that minutes are taken, at all meetings of the College Democrats, including but not limited to board meetings, Member-at-Large meetings, membership

meetings, committee meetings, and events, and make the minutes of open meetings available to the general membership.

3. Send out the weekly announcement email to the full membership, and seek out other ways of publicizing Dems activities to the full membership and campus.

4. In consultation with the President and the executive board, make up agendas for meetings of the board, Members-at-Large, and membership.

5. Assist the President and Vice-President in administrative matters.

E. *Duties of the Treasurer.* The Treasurer shall:

1. Direct fundraising activities and prepare all grants.

2. Manage the bank account, the receipts and paper work in case of an audit, and the dues paying membership and t-shirt sales.

3. Perform such duties as the President may assign, as well as such duties that are customarily performed by a treasurer.

F. *Duties of the Campaigns Chair.* He or she shall lead the Campaigns Committee in fulfilling these duties:

1. Supervise and work to build campaign subgroups.

2. Lead organization-wide campaign efforts.

3. Educate members in the skills relevant to campaign work.

G. *Duties of the Communications Chair.* He or she shall lead the Communications Committee in fulfilling these duties:

1. Notify media of all events of the College Democrats and ensure media coverage.

2. Write op-eds and letters-to-the-editor, and see that they are placed in campus and off-campus publications.

3. In consultation with the Treasurer and Political Chair, seek out new ways of publicizing the Democratic message on campus.

4. Produce content for the College Democrats online presence.

H. *Duties of the Events Chair.* He or she shall lead the Events Committee in fulfilling these duties:

1. Bring prominent Democratic speakers to campus and build crowds for these events.

2. Organize a regular convention of the full membership.

3. Organize faculty dinners, speakers dinners, and a regular formal dinner.

4. Generate ideas for and plan events relevant to Democratic politics and policy.

I. *Duties of the Legislative Chair.* He or she shall lead the Legislative Committee in fulfilling these duties:

1. Write position papers for the Dems, with approval by a 2/3 majority of the Executive Board.
2. Moderate issue discussions, and maintain and update the Harvard Dems platform.
3. Maintain contacts with elected officials at the local, state, and national level.
4. Arrange regular debates with the Harvard Republican Club and train members in debate skills.

J. *Duties of the Membership Chair.* He or she shall lead the Membership Committee in fulfilling these duties:

1. Work with house and yard captains to build up house and yard organizations.
2. Organize recruitment drives during peak periods and year-round.
3. Organize regular social events.
4. Keep alumni aware of and connected to the organization.
5. Seek out internship opportunities for members and provide them with information about securing internships.

K. *Duties of the Political Chair.* He or she shall lead the Political Committee in fulfilling these duties:

1. Attend meetings of other relevant groups on the Harvard campus, and keep them aware of College Democrats activities and keep the board aware of other groups' activities.
2. Keep abreast of campus politics and organize on-campus activism around campus issues.
3. With Campaigns Chair, organize on-campus activism around national issues.

Article 7: Elections

A. Elections shall take place within the two weeks before Thanksgiving Day.

B. *Eligibility to run for a position and vote.* Voting shall be limited to members of the College Democrats who have: 1) paid their membership dues on or before November 1st, or a date designated by the Executive Board; and 2) attended at least three of the following: general or committee meetings on three separate dates; campaign activities; service projects; or other commitment-intensive events or activities approved by the Board.

C. *Voting procedure.*

1. Members-at-Large in good standing who are eligible to vote according to the criteria in Article 7, Section B shall be permitted to vote by absentee ballot if they can demonstrate good reason why they cannot be present at the election meeting. Absentee ballots shall be submitted by the Monday before the election.

2. All those who are eligible to vote according to Article 7, Section B but are not Members-at-Large may only cast ballots in person during the election meeting scheduled by the Executive Board. Once the first campaign speech for President has begun, no one shall be allowed to enter and vote. No one shall be allowed to leave the elections before the result of the election for President and Vice-President has been announced. No one who leaves the room at any point during the elections will be permitted to re-enter the room and vote. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the election administrators.

D. *Secret ballots.* One vote per person per election. Candidates cannot vote in their own election.

E. *Order.* The first election shall be for the President and Vice President, who must run as a ticket. Elections continue as designated in Article 3 section A of the Constitution or as decided by the election administrators prior to the election.

F. *Administrators.* Three for each election; composed of Executive Board members, House Chairs, or dues-paying members who are not running for elected positions. Administrators can vote. The president will be one of the administrators unless he is running for a position or chooses not to become one. The Executive Board will appoint the other two administrators.

1. Administrators shall distribute campaign materials – no other literature may be distributed by anyone during the elections.

G. *Procedure.* Candidates are nominated directly before their election.

1. Speech length: President: 4 minutes; VP: 3 minutes; Other: 2 minutes

2. Q & A following each candidate's speech: Pres – 3 min; Other – 2 min

3. Q & A for the field: Pres – 3 questions; Other – 2 questions. Questions in this period will be submitted to the election commission prior to the election. The commission will select the questions to be asked among those submitted.

4. Vote counting and declaration of winner will occur directly after that election. Candidates will leave the room during the voting.

5. Instant run-off voting: Voters will rank order their candidate choices. If no candidate receives a majority of 1st place votes, the candidate with the lowest number of 1st place votes will be eliminated, and their votes will be redistributed to the next candidate in their rankings. This process will continue until a candidate receives a majority of votes.

H. *Drop-down elections.* Drop-down elections: A candidate may only drop-down once; totaling 2 elections.

Article 8: Removal

A. *Cause for removal.* Cause for removal shall be defined as malfeasance or nonfeasance of duties assigned by the Executive Board or delineated within this document, or as ineligibility for Executive Board membership pursuant to Article 2. Cause for removal shall also include grounds found by 3/4 members of the Executive Board to constitute good and sufficient cause.

B. *Process for removal.* To begin the process for removal, another member of the Executive Board must charge the officer with the reasons for his or her removal publicly at a meeting of the Executive Board. The officer in question must be offered an opportunity to defend himself or herself at that meeting. After a period of two weeks the issue shall be put to a vote. Three-fourths of the Executive Board must vote for removal for an officer to be removed.

Article 9: Vacancies

A. *Declaration of vacancy.* A vacancy shall be declared when a member of the Executive Board dies, resigns, or is removed from office. If the vacancy occurs in an Executive Board position other than the President, the President shall appoint a successor with a 2/3 majority consent of the remaining Executive Board. If the vacancy is the President, then the Vice-President shall automatically be the replacement.

Article 10: Amendments

A. *Procedure.* The Constitution can be amended by a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Board with 2/3 approval by the dues-paying membership.