

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF  
SCIENCE & ART

# THE COOPER UNION



CONSTITUTION OF THE  
JOINT STUDENT COUNCIL

New York  
2016

## **Mission**

The Joint Student Council maintains a platform for discussion and takes action in an effort to benefit the student body. In an attempt to manifest the will of the students, the Council hears divergent positions through deliberation, and consequently finds a coherent voice. The Council passes resolutions that pursue policy initiatives concerning the academic, social, and administrative interests of the students. Finally, the Council sustains clear dialogue with the community in the spirit of continued positive change to our institution.

## **1 Selection of Members**

1. Only members of the three student councils are eligible for placement.
2. Members are elected to the Council by consensus of their respective student councils, in accordance with the laws and standing practices of those councils.
3. All Administrative Chairs are automatically members of the Council.
4. The Council is comprised of:
  - Ten members from The School of Engineering
  - Five members from The School of Art
  - Five members from The School of Architecture

## **2 Rights and Responsibilities of Members**

Members are individuals selected according to the guidelines set forth in §1, with the following rights and responsibilities:

1. The right to vote on resolutions.
2. The responsibility to maintain a thorough understanding of the concerns of their constituencies.

3. The right to call for emergency meetings. A consensus between at least five members is required to call an emergency meeting.
4. The responsibility to attend every meeting. In the event that members cannot attend, they must delegate their responsibilities to an alternate. Absence without delegation of an alternate will be recorded. The second such absence results in the expulsion of the member from both the Council and their respective student council.
5. The responsibility to represent the best interests of their respective constituencies to the best of their abilities.

## **3 Selected Functions of Members**

1. Members of the following committees are elected by votes of confidence according to a simple majority. Elected members hold annual terms.
2. The Resolution Committee is comprised of one member from each school. At the request of the Council, the committee will attempt to finalize language in the spirit and intent of the consensus developed by the Council. Members of the Resolution Committee are expected to meet outside of regular meetings. Following the first revision of a resolution, a vote may be held by the Council.

3. The Constitution Committee reviews the Council's Constitution at the end of each academic year. If amendments are necessary, the committee must present those amendments to the Council during their first session of the year. The Council must accept amendments with agreement from the three councils at large.
4. The Secretary:
  - (a) Takes notes at each meeting
  - (b) Minutes the notes
  - (c) Produces ballots
  - (d) Tallies votes and documents how members voted
  - (e) Sends the notes and voting documentation to Administrative Chairs
  - (f) Maintains public outreach

## **4 Rights and Responsibilities of Administrative Chairs**

1. The responsibility to represent the will of the Council to the administration of The Cooper Union.
2. The responsibility to schedule at least four mandatory meetings of the Council at the beginning of the semester. The schedule is distributed to the student body prior to the first meeting.

3. The responsibility to organize meeting agendas before meetings.
4. The responsibility to chair Council meetings on a rotating basis.
5. The responsibility to circulate certain materials to the student body seventy-two hours before each meeting. These materials include but are not limited to:
  - (a) updates on substantive information
  - (b) agenda
  - (c) resolution proposals
  - (d) meeting locations and times
6. The responsibility to approve meeting minutes and voting records on resolutions from §3.4.

## **5 Procedure and Requirements for Meetings**

1. Quorum is 70%.
2. All meetings are open and accessible to the student body.
3. The agenda, from §4.3, will facilitate discussion. Note, the Council need not be limited by the agenda.

4. Requirements for voting materials and balloting: Materials will be retained and published in accordance with §6.

- (a) Members cast their votes on closed paper ballots. Appendix A contains a sample ballot.
- (b) Each ballot must contain the following information:
  - the name of the voter
  - the resolution number
  - the date on which the vote was cast
  - the position held (for, against, abstain)
- (c) If a delegated alternate votes in place of a member, both the name of that alternate and that member will be recorded.

5. The following is a procedure for submitting resolution proposals:

- (a) Any student may draft a resolution to be submitted to the Council in care of any council member.
- (b) The receiving council member submits the proposal to an Administrative Chair, as appropriate.
- (c) The Chair, following review of the proposal, decides whether to petition for the placement of the proposal on a future agenda.
- (d) The Administrative Chairs compile resolution proposals fit to discuss at Council meetings.

6. The following is a procedure for amendment and acceptance or rejection of resolution proposals:

- (a) Given a resolution proposal, those present deliberate until the voting members have determined a course of action.
  - (b) If the resolution requires alteration, those present may amend the resolution proposal. The Council may utilize the Resolution Committee in accordance with §3.2.
  - (c) At the following meeting, members may vote to pass the resolution.
  - (d) Resolutions pass by a minimum of 70% in favor, of those voting for and those voting against. However, if the entirety (10 for engineering, 5 for art, 5 for architecture) of a school's contingency votes against, then a resolution cannot pass.
7. Under extraordinary circumstances, meetings shall be scheduled or rescheduled by Administrative Chairs. In the case of an emergency meeting, §5.5 and §5.6.a-c may be disregarded at the discretion of the Administrative Chairs.

## 6 Regarding Publishable Materials

1. Administrative Chairs will review all publishable materials, holding responsibility for their distribution and archival as appropriate.

## A Sample Ballot

2. Publishable materials will include, but are not limited to, resolutions, minutes from Council meetings, resolution vote tallies, corresponding names of members, and their votes.

## 7 Accountability

Regarding the removal or resignation of members:

1. If a member is deemed unfit to maintain their role by the Council, a vote can be held to remove said member.
2. A member may resign at any point, to be replaced by their respective student council in accordance with the laws and standing practices of that council.
3. The student body at large reserves the right to remove all members of the Council by referendum, passing with 70% of the student body in favor of dissolution. Following the referendum, the outgoing members of the three constituent councils hold elections for all positions. Constitutional review commences, led by members selected from each newly elected council. After review and adoption, if necessary, by the three councils, the councils fill the Council according to the most current constitution.

### Ballot of the Joint Student Council

Let the record show that \_\_\_\_\_, with \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ at the \_\_\_\_\_ (res. #) \_\_\_\_\_ meetings, stands:

- For  
 Against  
 In Abstention

If the voting party is a delegated alternate please identify the member for whom you stand: \_\_\_\_\_ (name)