

Constitution of The Civics Law & Policy Society at the University of Texas at Austin

Preamble

The Civics Law & Policy Society seeks to foster intellectual inquiry and interdisciplinary dialogue. It will serve as a preparatory forum and promote the virtues of integrity, justice, and ethical reasoning for individuals pursuing a career in law. The Society will celebrate all forms of civic engagement and examine how the legal profession can benefit communities. Through service-based learning projects, members will provide for community needs and be introduced to important concepts such as pro bono initiatives. Members will also have the opportunity to attend lectures featuring distinguished legal scholars. Through these experiences, society members will gain meaningful connections with legal professionals and deepen their understanding of jurisprudence. Furthermore, the Society will host forums for debate and inquiry about law, ethics, and social justice. These forums preserve a tradition of intellectual fellowship and philosophical inquiry regarding the foundations of law within the Society. Preserving the spirit of inquiry ensures the maintenance and development of all members' moral foundation. The refinement of Society members' ethical reasoning skills will also aid members when facing legal ambiguity in their careers. The Society will further cultivate intellectual tradition by encouraging undergraduate research in jurisprudence and civic engagement. Society members will have the opportunity to submit their work for peer review and publication in a Society-sponsored journal. Ultimately, The Civics Law & Policy Society aims to prepare its members for meaningful contributions to the field of law through intellectual fellowship, service, and philosophical inquiry.

Article I – University Compliance

This organization is a recognized student organization at The University of Texas at Austin and shall comply with all campus policies as set forth in the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities*.

Article II – Prohibition of Hazing

State law and Sec. 6-404 of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities* define hazing as any intentional, knowing or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution.

Article III – Membership and Eligibility

• Section 1 – Membership Restriction

- In accordance with Sec. 6-203 of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities*, this organization restricts membership to students, faculty members, and staff members of the University.

• Section 2 – Eligibility of Membership

- In accordance with Sec. 6-203 of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities*, this organization may not deny membership on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, except that a registered student organization created primarily for religious purposes may restrict the right to vote or hold office to persons who subscribe to the registered student organization's statement of faith; and a registered student organization

may restrict membership based on the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

- Section 3 – Member Removal Procedure

- Grounds for removal include: any form of harassment, discrimination, or abuse; violation of policies outlined in The Civics Law & Policy Society constitution; failure to attend all meetings; violation of the university code of conduct
- Members of The Civics Law & Policy Society accused of any grounds for removal will be notified via email.
- The member will have the opportunity to address the Governing Chair and Strategy and Logistics Chair with a defense within ten days of receiving the email.
- After hearing the accused's defense and examining the evidence, the Governing Chair and Strategy and Logistics Chair will make a decision and notify the accused of the decision via email or zoom meeting.
- The accused will have the opportunity to appeal the decision by emailing the board within ten days.
- The appeal will be conducted by the remaining members of the board. The board members will review the defense and evidence and come to a decision within five days. The accused will be notified of the decision via email or zoom meeting.

Article IV – Officers

- Section 1 – Officers

- The Civics Law & Policy Society will consist of the following officers, making up the board of the Society:
 - Governing Chair, Strategy and Logistics Chair, Communications Chair, Programming Chair, and Financial Chair

- Section 2 – Officer duties and responsibilities

- All officers must attend board meetings and actively contribute ideas for the planning, execution, and continuous improvement of the Society's initiatives and mission.
- Governing Chair
 - Facilitate board and general meetings, maintain order and ensure productive dialogue
 - Serve as the primary liaison between the Society and the university administrators
- Strategy and Logistics Chair
 - Draft and maintain Society documents, policies, and meeting notes
 - Propose, implement, and refine strategic initiatives and programs to expand the Society's reach and impact
 - Coordinate logistics across chairs, aligning timelines and resources to keep projects on track
- Communications Chair
 - Manage the Society's communications, outreach, and public image through social media, email, and website updates
 - Support recruitment of new members by creating accessible informational materials and outreach campaigns
 - Collaborate with the Programming Chair to plan academic and professional programming, including guest lectures, workshops, and discussion forums
- Programming Chair
 - Manage venue booking, scheduling, guest coordination, and materials needed for events
 - Collaborate with the Communications Chair to plan academic and professional

- programming, including guest lectures, workshops, and discussion forums
 - Organize service-learning projects to connect Society members with community needs
- Financial Chair
 - Manage the Society's budget, sponsorship, and financial records with transparency and accountability
 - Advise the board on the financial feasibility of proposed initiatives
 - Track expenses and prepare semesterly reports for the board
- Section 3 – Officer Selection Process
 - Incoming officers will be appointed by the General Assembly as outlined in Article VIII.
- Section 4 – Officer Removal Procedure
 - Grounds for removal include: any form of harassment, discrimination, or abuse; violation of policies outlined in The Civics Law & Policy Society constitution; failure to attend all meetings; failure to complete officer duties and responsibilities; violation of the university code of conduct
 - Officers of The Civics Law & Policy Society accused of any grounds for removal will be notified via email.
 - The officer will have the opportunity to address the two board members in good standing with a defense within five business days of receiving the email.
 - After hearing the accused's defense and examining the evidence, the addressed board members will make a decision and notify the accused of the decision via email or zoom meeting.
 - The accused will have the opportunity to appeal the decision by emailing the board within ten days.
 - The appeal will be conducted by the remaining board members in good standing. The board members will review the defense and evidence and come to a decision within five business days. The accused will be notified of the decision via email or zoom meeting.

Article V – Meetings

- Section 1: Meeting Frequency
 - General meetings will be held every three weeks on Thursdays. Attendance is required for three meetings per semester and highly encouraged for additional meetings.
 - Board meetings will be held every week on Wednesdays. Attendance is mandatory.
- Section 2: Special Meetings
 - Special meetings can be called by board members. Board members must call special meetings at least 24 hours in advance.
- Section 3: Voting
 - In order to secure a vote a quorum of 60% of members must be in attendance.

Article VI – University Advisor

- In accordance with Sec. 6-101 (14) and Sec. 6-101(15) of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities*, this organization may have a University Advisor who is at least twenty-one years of age, is not enrolled as a student at the University, and serves as either:
 - A part-time or full-time employee of the University.
 - A representative of a national organization that is associated with the registered student organization.
- University Advisor duties
 - The University Advisor's duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- Provide guidance to the board on university policies and professional development
- Serve as a resource for institutional knowledge and connect the Society with faculty, administrators, and relevant university offices
- Advise the board on risk management and compliance with the University's rules
- Support the Society's programming efforts by recommending speakers, resources, and professional opportunities, without assuming an event management role
- Maintain an advisory role in financial oversight by ensuring spending aligns with university policy without authorizing or disbursing funds

Article VII – Finances

- Section 1: Dues
 - This is a sponsored organization; no dues are required.
- Section 2: Budgetary Responsibilities
 - The Financial Chair oversees The Civics Law & Policy Society's budget and sponsorship standing.
- Section 3: Financial decisions
 - Any board member can request funds from the Financial Chair by means of email, verbal request at board meetings, or online communication.
 - The Civics Law & Policy Society's funds may only be used when a simple majority of board members approve of the allocation of money during board meetings or via online communication.

Article VIII – Elections

- Section 1: Elections
 - Elections will be held at the end of spring semester. Members will be notified about upcoming elections one month prior by email, social media, and general meeting announcements.
- Section 2: Nominations
 - Any member who is in good standing for one academic year can be a candidate for an officer position. To be an official candidate for an officer position, an individual must submit an application to the board.
 - Candidates will present a five minute video or live presentation summarizing their qualifications, leadership approach, and plans for the position to the General Assembly during a designated general meeting
 - The General Assembly will vote for one candidate in each officer position during a required general meeting
 - All candidates for each officer position will be on the ballot presented to the General Assembly
- Section 3: Voting Process
 - Voting will be done via a secure electronic platform presented during a required general meeting
 - A candidate must receive a plurality of votes to secure the officer position
- Section 4: Quorum
 - A quorum of 60% of members must be in attendance in order to conduct the election.

Article IX – Amendments

- All amendments or changes to this constitution must be reflected in an updated constitution that must be submitted to Student Activities in the Office of the Dean of Students at 2609 University Ave., Suite 2.112 within 14 days of its approval.

- Section 1: Accessibility

- Any member belonging to the Society for one semester can submit proposals for amendments. Proposals must be presented by an individual or collective to board members during a board meeting. The individual or collective presenting the amendment(s) must set up a meeting three days prior to the board member meeting.

OR

- Board members may propose and ratify amendment(s) to the constitution in good faith as necessary with unanimous approval of board members and oversight of the University Advisor
 - If unanimously agreed upon during an official board meeting with the University Advisor's oversight, the amendment does not need to be ratified during a general meeting.

- Section 2: Ratification process

- Amendment proposals will be examined during board member meetings and decided upon within three weeks of the presentation.
- To be ratified, a simple majority vote must be obtained from a quorum of 60% of Society members present at the general meeting.
- If the amendment is ratified, the amendment will go into effect at the end of the academic semester.