

Hart House Debating Club Constitution



Updated as of May 2015 by the 2014/2015 Executive

1. This club shall be known as the Hart House Debating Club (the Club).
2. The purpose of the Hart House Debating Club is to:
 - a) Encourage the use of debating skills among interested students from all colleges and faculties across the University of Toronto; and
 - b) To provide a forum in which members interact to improve verbal skills and speaking confidence of Club members through the separate use of informal debates; in-house tournaments, and off-campus tournaments
3. These procedures have priority over all other rules, regulations, traditions or customs of the Club. The contents of this document delineate mandatory procedures of the Club executive and Club operation and some, but not all, of the specific duties of each member of the executive and of the executive as a whole within the framework of the Hart House Club and Committee system.
4. To be a Traveling Member of the Club one must
 - a) be a member of Hart House
 - b) purchase a Club membership for the current academic year
 - c) meet attendance requirements as stipulated in the bylaws; and
 - d) have fulfilled the service requirements as stipulated in the bylaws
5. Officers of the executive and their election
 - a) The whole executive shall determine the long-term policy authority of the Club with the Club Secretary handling all short-term (inter-meeting) policy
 - b) The executive shall consist of eleven (13) members: Secretary, Treasurer, External Tournaments Coordinator, Internal Tournaments Coordinator, Tuesday Meetings Coordinator, Monday Meetings Coordinator, Communications Director, Outreach Director, Socials Director, two Novice Members-at-Large, a Program Advisor (non-voting), and a Chair
 - c) The first 9 of these positions shall be filled for the following academic year by elections held in March, the specific date and time to be determined by the incumbent Executive
 - d) The Novice Members-at-Large
 - i) shall be elected no later than the last day in October in the year in which the positions will be held, and this election is to be held only after 6 informals are held;
 - ii) shall be elected from amongst those members who are in their first academic year as members of the club; and
 - iii) in the event that a member has transferred from another club, he or she will not be allowed to run for election as Novice Member-at-Large
 - e) Should insufficient eligible candidates present themselves for the position of Novice Member-at-Large, a returning member of the club may run for election as Member-at-Large
 - f) The Programme Advisor shall be appointed by Hart House
 - g) The Chair shall be appointed by the Warden of Hart House with input from the Executive, for approval by the Hart House Board of Stewards

6. Election Procedures

- a) Only members who have a minimum of 8 meetings in the academic year may cast a ballot for each elected Executive position.
- b) For the March elections, to be considered eligible to vote, one must have held membership in the Club for not less than two weeks.
- c) For the election of the Novice Members-at-Large, only members in their first academic year as members of the Club shall be allowed to vote.
- d) In the event that one or more of the Novice Member-at-Large positions becomes open to returning Club members, the other returning Club members shall be allowed to vote in that election.
- e) In the event that a member has transferred from another club, he or she shall be treated as a senior member in terms of voting eligibility.
- f) If a vacancy in the Executive occurs after the March election and before the September/October elections that position shall be open for voting during the September/October election and the voter eligibility requirements shall be the same as for the member at large position elected at the same time.
- g) Should a position on the Executive become vacant during the academic year, the Executive shall hold a by-election as soon as feasible.
- h) The Executive shall also make all reasonable efforts to notify all Club members of election and by-election dates, by e-mail, telephone, or post; at the same time, they must also provided the criteria for candidacy and voting.
- i) In order to qualify for election, a candidate must be an eligible voter.
- j) The positions will be elected in the following order: Secretary, Treasurer, External Tournaments Coordinator, Internal Tournaments Coordinator, Tuesday Meetings Coordinator, Monday Meetings Coordinator, Communications Director, Outreach Director, Socials Director
- k) The winner of the election shall be determined by simple majority (50% +1) and in compliance with applicable Hart House Club and Committee election procedure.
- l) Except as otherwise stated in this procedure manual, the rules governing elections shall be the same for all other Hart House Committees. These rules can be acquired from the Club and Committees Guidelines document, available from the Programme Advisor.
- m) Any member who is unable to attend an election but still wishes to vote must submit their directed proxies to the Programme Advisor in writing at least 24 hours in advance of the election.

7. Impeachment of a Member of the Executive

- a) A member of the Executive may be impeached if:
 - i) They have failed to attend three consecutive Executive meetings without sending regrets or;

- ii) They have failed to perform their assigned duties or otherwise grossly interfered with the operating of the Executive
- b) A motion for impeachment may only be carried by a two-thirds majority. Reasonable attempts must be made to contact the Executive Member to inform him or her of the motion before it may be brought to a vote

8. Executive Meetings

- a) At least three (3) Executive meetings will be held each term during the regular academic year (September to December and January to May)
- b) Each elected Executive member has one vote at Executive meetings; non-elected members do not have votes at executive meetings, except the Chair, who may vote in the event of a tie
- c) Quorum for meetings shall be fifty percent (50%) of all filled elected positions. Therefore quorum with a full Executive (11) is six
- d) Except as otherwise stated in this constitution, or in the bylaws, the rules governing Executive meetings shall be in the same as for all other Hart House Committees

9. Regular Meetings

- a) The Club shall hold twice-weekly informal meetings during the regular academic year.
- b) Once a year, following the March elections and before the end of the academic year, the club shall hold its Annual General Meeting, which shall serve as a forum for the club membership to voice their concerns to the outgoing and incoming executive.
- c) The incumbent Executive shall give club members notice of the date for the Annual General Meeting at least two weeks in advance.

10. Club Archives and Files

- a) The Secretary shall maintain a Club archive in a place accessible to the general members of the club
- b) The archive shall include, but not be limited to, a current copy of the constitution and bylaws, the minutes from the Annual General Meeting, the minutes of all Executive meetings, records of competitive results, and all Club correspondence

11. Limitations of Club Authority

While the Hart House Debating Club is responsible for competitive debate at Hart House, the selection of teams and the management of fundraising for the World Universities Debating Championships has been delegated to the Debates Committee as per the World's Transfer Document

12. Amendment to the Hart House Debating Club Constitution

- a) All Executive members must be advised of any proposed amendment or change to this document, and be advised of the proposed amendments or changes at least 2 weeks before the scheduled date to vote on them
- b) Any amendment to this document must be approved by at least two thirds of the executive
- c) All rules regarding the normal procedure of executive meetings apply to meetings dealing with amendments or changes to the Procedures Manual

13. Amendments to the Bylaws

The Executive may amend or adopt bylaws not inconsistent with this constitution. Such changes shall require a simple majority of 50% + 1 of the Executive members

