

# **Constitution of the Harvard College Queer Students and Allies (QSA)**

*Drafted and ratified by the QSA Executive Board on 1/19/1997. Last amended 3/1/2009.*

## **Article I. Name**

The name of the organization shall be 'The Harvard College Queer Students and Allies.' The organization shall also be officially recognized as 'The Harvard College QSA.' Either name can be used at the discretion of the Executive Board.

## **Article II. Purpose**

The QSA will be concerned with improving the visibility, strength, and support of the Harvard College undergraduate bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender, and queer communities in recognition of the marginalization and oppression that exists as a result of stigmatization of queer sexuality and gender. This group seeks to promote community awareness of the social, political, educational, and cultural issues surrounding queer identities and sexualities.

## **Article III. Membership**

**Section 1.** Membership in the Harvard College QSA will be open to all students in good standing currently enrolled in Harvard College, regardless of color, creed, gender identity or expression, physical disability, race, sex, or sexual orientation.

**Section 2.** Membership will be retained until the student severs relations with the University whether by graduation or otherwise. Membership will be retained during vacations and recesses of the University.

**Section 3.** As dues may prohibit or discourage the membership of certain persons based on financial situation or comfort with queer identity, dues will not be procured as a requirement for membership.

**Section 4.** Any member may resign at any time by filing a written resignation with one of the Community Chairs of the QSA Executive Board.

## **Article IV. Officers of the Executive Board**

**Section 1.** The Executive Board of the QSA shall consist of whatever positions the Executive Board deems necessary.

**Section 2.** All officers shall be registered undergraduates in Harvard College.

**Section 3.** The Executive Board shall strive to be representative of the Membership of the QSA.

**Section 4.** The Co-Chairs of the QSA are the chief executive officers of the QSA and shall have general supervision and control of its activities and programs. The Co-Chairs shall chair all Executive Board meetings. The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for maintaining and moderating QSA email lists. The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for apprising all Executive Board members of QSA policy and directives. The Co-Chairs shall delegate responsibilities as necessary with the assistance of the Executive Board. The two (2) Co-Chairs may divide their responsibilities between themselves as they find appropriate based on experience and interest, but neither Co-Chair shall ever have a significantly greater number of responsibilities than their fellow Co-Chair.

**Section 5.** The Community Chairs of the QSA shall be responsible for organizing community meetings to build a sense of community among QSA members and to facilitate communication between the QSA Membership and the Executive Board. Community meetings shall occur twice monthly during the regular term. The Community Chairs must also maintain communication with queer groups from local universities and in the surrounding community. The Community Chairs are in charge of any community service that the QSA performs. The Community Chairs shall be responsible for apprising all Executive Board members of QSA policy and directives. They shall ensure that the QSA Executive Board abides by its Constitution and shall serve as parliamentarian de facto. The two (2) Community Chairs may divide their responsibilities as they and the Executive Board find appropriate based on experience and interest, but neither Community Chair shall ever have a significantly greater number of responsibilities than their fellow Community Chair. Every term, the one (1) Community Chair neither at the end of their term nor up for election shall be responsible for implementing the Fall or Spring Election cycle. If no Community Chair fits these requirements, then the responsibility of running the Election cycle will fall on an officer not up for election for that cycle to be determined by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

**Section 6.** The Treasurer shall be charged with the financial affairs of the QSA and shall keep detailed and accurate records of these affairs. This entails writing grants, keeping accurate records of which funds get attributed to these grants, etc. The Treasurer will bear full responsibility for any inaccuracies in the finances of the QSA. The Treasurer will produce a financial breakdown of all events funded by the QSA. The Treasurer will complete all financial breakdowns and close all outstanding accounts of the QSA before the end of their term of office.

**Section 7.** The Secretary of the QSA shall record minutes and attendance of all Executive Board meetings, save them and distribute them to the officers prior to the next Executive Board meeting. The Secretary shall compile a list of weekly officer tasks that the Executive Board will create at its meetings, and the Secretary shall save and distribute the list with the weekly minutes to the officers. The Secretary shall be responsible for sending out QSA weekly updates over the “QSA-announce” email list. The Secretary

shall be responsible for updating the website weekly with QSA events. The Secretary shall be responsible for moderating the membership of both the “QSA-open” and “QSA-announce” e-mail lists.

**Section 8.** The Political Chairs shall be responsible for ensuring that awareness about LGBT issues is maintained on campus. The Political Chairs shall facilitate activism on campus for the purpose of raising visibility around the issues facing the membership of the QSA. They shall maintain communication with other campus organizations to ensure that LGBT issues are examined within communities outside of the QSA. The two (2) Political Chairs may divide their responsibilities as they and the Executive Board find appropriate based on experience and interest, but neither Political Chair shall ever have a significantly greater number of responsibilities than their fellow Political Chair

**Section 9.** The Social Chairs shall be responsible for organizing QSA social events. The Social Chairs shall organize three (3) dances per year. The Social Chairs shall organize social meetings for the QSA Membership that shall occur once a month during the regular term. The Social Chairs may form a committee comprised of other Executive Board members and/or QSA members in order to assist in planning and carrying out social events, but the responsibility of carrying out the social events shall fall on the Social Chairs. The two (2) Social Chairs may divide their responsibilities as they and the Executive Board find appropriate based on experience and interest, but neither Social Chair shall ever have a significantly greater number of responsibilities than their fellow Social Chair.

**Section 10.** The Publicity Chair shall be responsible for ensuring that the QSA Membership, members of the Harvard community, and members of the Boston Area communities, when appropriate, are cognizant and apprised of QSA events and activities. The Publicity Chair shall create and be in charge of printing/distributing all on-line advertisements, posters, and email blurbs related to QSA events. The Publicity Chair shall maintain working relationships with relevant media, including, but not limited to, *The Harvard Crimson*. The Publicity Chair shall author or coordinate authoring of QSA opinion pieces in relevant media, including, but not limited to, *The Harvard Crimson*. QSA opinion pieces shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval before being submitted for publication.

**Section 11.** To provide the first-year class of Harvard College a voice in the QSA and to introduce first-year individuals to the operations of the Board, every year, the elected Board shall request first-years to represent the BGLTS community in their class.

**I.** The number and dorm distribution of representatives shall be at the discretion of the elected Board. Shall there be too many volunteers to be representatives, the Board may create a short appointment process to choose representatives.

**II.** Because they will not be elected by the QSA membership, the representatives shall be acting Board members but shall not have voting power in Board decisions.

**III.** Representatives shall be responsible for providing the Board their opinion and that of their first-year peers on QSA operations, as well as minor responsibilities shared by the Board, such as postering in Harvard Yard, publicity, and event set-ups.

**Section 12.** Every sub-committee of the QSA shall appoint their own representative to sit on the Board, as outlined by the new Article VIII, Section 2.

## **Article V. Elections and Terms for Resignation/Impeachment**

**Section 1.** The Officers of the Executive Board shall be elected annually by the members of the QSA. Elections for the positions of Co-Chairs (2), Community Chair, Treasurer, Publicity Chair, Social Chair, and Political Chair will be held during the month of May. The term of Office for Co-Chairs (2), Community Chair, Treasurer, Social Chair, Secretary, Publicity Chair, and Political Chair will begin on the last day of the Spring Term and will terminate on the last day of the Spring Term of the following academic year. Terms for the positions of the second Community Chair, the second Social Chair, the second Political Chair, will begin immediately after they are elected in the Fall Term (December or January) and will terminate on the last day of the Fall Term of the following academic year. One of the Community Chairs shall be responsible for running each election and informing members of the election process.

**Sub-Section 1a.** Rotating system. To ensure that each newly elected Community Chair, Social Chair, and Political Chair shall have an experienced partner whenever possible, elections shall be run on a “rotating system,” in which one chair will always have had at least one semester of previous experience. Therefore, each election, only one new Community Chair, one new Social Chair, and one new Political Chair will be elected, and one each of the previous Community Chairs, Social Chairs, and Political Chairs will remain on the Board for that semester for guidance purposes.

**Section 2.** Elections shall span a three-week period, placed within each semester at the discretion of the Board but ending prior to that semester's Final Examinations. Those three weeks shall consist of:

**I.** A Nomination Period spanning 7 days, in which nominations for candidates shall be taken from the QSA Membership. Any Member of the QSA may nominate themselves or another member for election. Nominations shall be filed with the Community Chair within the Nomination Period.

**II.** A Statement Submission Period spanning 3 days, in which nominees shall submit their candidacy statements to the Community Chair, who will review each statement for error with the candidate prior to the Membership Review Period.

**III.** A Membership Review Period spanning 4 days, in which the QSA Membership shall review candidacy statements.

**IV.** A Voting Period spanning 7 days, in which the Membership shall submit their vote electronically via the Harvard iCommons Polling Tool.

**Section 3.** Vote Determination. All members of the QSA shall have one vote. Members may vote by proxy if necessary. A plurality of votes cast within the Voting Period shall determine the recipient of the position. At the end of Elections, the Community Chair shall be responsible for announcing the results to the QSA Membership within one week after close of elections.

**Section 4.** Impeachment. The Officers of the Executive Board shall openly discuss the effectiveness of its operation in regards to any one member of the Board. A call for the resignation of any Officer is constituted by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board. Following such a call, the Co-Chairs are obligated to formally ask the Officer in question for their resignation, providing reason for such a call in a formal letter of request for resignation. The Officer, if unwilling to resign, may call upon the Executive Board again for a final vote, in which case a unanimous vote of the Board is necessary to impeach said Officer.

**Section 5.** Resignation of a Co-Chair. Should the position of a Co-Chair be suddenly vacated within a term, it is necessary to fill the position with someone who has had prior experience on the Board. This is to ensure continuity and experienced leadership in the Board until the Co-Chair election at the end of the year because the position uniquely requires more experience and commitment than other Board positions.

**I.** The Co-Chair shall announce their resignation to the QSA Membership.

**II.** All current members of the Board who wish to run for the newly vacated Co-Chair position shall write their proposal and present it to the Board. Those Board members not running for the Co-Chair position shall hold a Co-Chair election among themselves.

**III.** The Board member with the majority or plurality of Board votes shall now become Co-Chair. Their newly vacated position shall then be opened to general election, as outlined by Article V.

**IV.** Should no Board member wish to run for Co-Chair, the position shall automatically be opened to general election, as outlined by Article V.

**V.** Should there be a tie in the Board vote, the Co-Chair Election shall be opened to general election, as outlined by Article V, so that general members can run along with the Board members engaged in tie. Should a present Board member win the general election, their newly vacated position shall then be opened in a subsequent general election, as outlined by Article V.

**VI.** The newly elected Co-Chair's term shall last only until general Co-Chair elections at the end of the academic year.

**Section 6.** Special Election. In the event that a position on the Executive Board, other than Co-Chair, should become vacant, the Executive Board may, by majority vote, establish a Special Election to fill that position. The Special Election will be a general election, and proceed in accordance with Article V, Section 2 and Article V, Section 3.

## **Article VI. Meetings**

**Section 1.** The Executive Board of the QSA shall meet at least once per week to provide planning and leadership for the QSA.

**Section 2.** Community meetings shall be held twice a month during the regular term.

**Section 3.** Social meetings shall be held once a month during the regular term.

**Section 4.** A simple majority of seven (7) Executive Board members is sufficient to constitute a quorum in an Executive Board Meeting. A simple majority of seven (7) Executive Board members is sufficient to decide all matters of business.

**Section 5.** No quorum is necessary to conduct a community meeting or a social meeting.

**Section 6.** The Co-Chairs shall alternate facilitating Executive Board meetings. In the absence of one Co-Chair, the other Co-Chair shall facilitate the Executive Board meeting. In the absence of both Co-Chairs, the Community Chairs shall conduct the meeting.

**Section 7.** The Secretary shall record minutes of all Executive Board meetings. In the absence of the Secretary, the Publicity Chair shall take the meeting minutes.

**Section 8.** The Co-Chairs shall communicate notice of Executive Board meetings. The Publicity Chair shall communicate notice of community meetings and social meetings.

**Section 9.** The Secretary shall record attendance, to be placed in the meeting notes, at every meeting of the Executive Board.

## **Article VII. Final Reports and Membership Evaluations**

**Section 1.** At the end of the academic year, all members of the Executive Board shall compile a Final Report for the subsequent year. Final Reports shall include, but not be limited to: reports of events, problems faced by the Board and resolutions reached, procedures for certain matters of business, new policies affecting the QSA in matters of business, and important contacts. They will serve as an aide to the incoming board

member for that given position and as a way to preserve an institutional memory of the organization.

**Section 2.** At the end of the academic year, the Community Chairs shall implement a Membership Evaluation. This will be a way for the QSA Membership to provide anonymous feedback to the Executive Board on matters of the BGLTS community at Harvard and beyond. The evaluation shall cover issues including, but not limited to: the effectiveness of QSA-organized events, improvements or changes to be made in how the Board runs the organization, Board-Membership relations, accessibility and usefulness of LGBT resources, and the role of the QSA within the Harvard College community and in relation to other student organizations off-campus.

## **Article VIII. Relationships with Affiliated Organizations**

**Section 1.** The BGLTS Resource Center shall remain its own organization separate from the QSA. The QSA, however, may choose to keep close ties to the BGLTS Resource Center as it sees fit insofar as the two organization's overall goals overlap. The precise definition of the goals of the Resource Center shall reside in the BGLTS Resource Center Constitution.

**Section 2.** In the event that another Harvard College student organization wishes to join the QSA as a sub-committee, for whatever reason, the QSA Board may authorize the union, subject to the following terms:

**I.** Although the sub-committee will lead its own meetings and activities separate from regular QSA operations, the QSA shall assume full responsibility of the activities of the sub-committee.

**II.** In order to keep the QSA Board informed of its plans and to seek Board approval to complete its goals, the sub-committee must appoint a representative to report regularly to the QSA Board meetings. This requires a minimal attendance of once a month.

**III.** Because they will not be elected onto the Board by the QSA membership, the appointed representative shall be an acting Board member but shall not have voting power in Board decisions.

**IV.** The QSA and the sub-committee shall maintain a reciprocal relationship. While the sub-committee may act under the QSA's status as an active student organization in Harvard College and, as such, have access to the QSA's resources, the membership of the sub-committee shall share the responsibilities of QSA operations, as the Board sees fit.

**V.** Current Sub-committees: Queer Asian Forum, Trans Task Force

## **Article IX. Amendment Procedure**

**Section 1.** This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the QSA Membership or by a unanimous vote of the QSA Executive Board.

**Section 2.** The membership of The Harvard College QSA reserves the right to propose an amendment with a petition signed by twelve members. This petition shall be submitted to one of the Community Chairs before the end of Nomination Period. The Community Chair reserves the right to edit the proposed amendment for grammar, but must ensure the petitioners approve of any changes made.

**Section 3.** Members of the Executive Board can propose amendments at any time throughout their term. The Executive Board must vote on all amendments proposed by board members no later than the last board meeting before Election Period. If the Executive Board does not reach a unanimous vote, the Community Chairs must put that amendment on the list of amendments put up for review before the membership.

**Section 4.** All amendments proposed by the membership of the Harvard College QSA or those amendments proposed by a board member that do not achieve a unanimous vote by the Executive Board must be given by one of the Community Chairs to the membership for consideration during Membership Review Period. All proposed amendments shall be voted on with the candidates for positions on the Executive Board during Voting Period.

## **Article IX. Electronic Communication**

**Section 1.** The most updated version of the Harvard College QSA Constitution shall be made available at all times on the official website of the Harvard College QSA within a timely manner.

**Section 2.** The QSA-Board e-mail list shall be comprised only of current Chairs, the past year's Co-Chairs, active Freshman Reps, and one Chair from each subcommittee.

## **Amendments to the Constitution**

*Amendments are here listed because they did not alter the text or meaning of the pre-existing form of the Constitution and required placement outside the current form of the Constitution.*

**Amendment 1.** Every effort shall be made to include gender-neutral language throughout the Harvard College QSA Constitution and any other official communications made by the organization.