

Constitution of Fuerza Latina

November 7, 2001

Preamble

We, the Board and members of Fuerza Latina, in our strive to enhance the presence of Latinos at Harvard University, to promote awareness of issues that affect the Latino community both at Harvard and in the greater Boston area, and most importantly, to provide a nurturing and caring environment for all, hereby establish this Constitution for Fuerza Latina.

Article I Name

The name of our organization is Fuerza Latina. The roots of the institution lie in the formation of Fuerza Quisqueyana, in 1993. In 1998, a motion was passed to rename the organization to Fuerza Latina, in order to better reflect the diversity of the membership.

Article II Purpose and Composition

Section 1- The Executive Board

The Executive Board of Fuerza Latina will consist of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Community Social Chair, Publicity Social Chair, and a Student Activities Committee representative.

Section 2- Project Development Committees

The Project Development Committees of Fuerza Latina are ad hoc groups that will consist of individual members, designated by the membership and Executive Board, seeking to initiate or coordinate activities on behalf of Fuerza Latina. These committees will operate under the guidance of the

Executive Board. The Executive Board retains full discretion over the actions perpetrated on behalf of the organization.

Section 3- The Membership

The membership is defined as follows:

- a) Voting Members- Any persons of the Harvard Community wishing to support the goals and tenets of Fuerza Latina, as defined in the constitution and brought forth every year in the Mission Statement, by attending three-fourths of the general meetings per semester.
- b) Non-Voting Members- Any persons of the Harvard University who attend general meetings.
- c) Fuerza Latina will not deny membership on the basis of race, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disabilities.

Article III- Duties and Responsibilities

Section 1- The Executive Board

- a) The Executive Board will propose and execute activities and measures aimed at furthering the principles laid forth in the Constitution.

- b) The Executive Board will represent the General Membership for all external purposes, including but not limited to, relations with organizations at other institutions and community leaders.

- c) The members of the Executive Board will be able to make the necessary decisions toward the fulfillment of their duties. This will include setting up the agenda for the year's activities and meetings.

- d) The Executive Board's actions are subject to review by the general membership of Fuerza Latina.

- e) The Executive Board will be responsible for the grant writing process that occurs once per semester. The Board shall collectively determine the appropriate grants to apply for each semester, and every member of the Board should participate in writing the grant applications.

- f) The President of Fuerza Latina will plan activities for the year in conjunction with the Executive Board. The President shall attend all meetings, and be directly responsible for the representation of Fuerza Latina. The President will also be responsible for establishing an active membership, be it through member recruitment, faculty recruitment, events, or meetings. Lastly, the President shall be concerned with fulfilling the goals put forth in this constitution for their given tenure.

- g) The Vice President shall assist the President in the efforts stated in Article III Section 1 Part f. The Vice President must attend meetings jointly with the President. In the event the President temporarily cannot perform his or her duties, the Vice President assumes the President's post until the President is able to return. In the event the President must take a leave of absence before the end of his or her term, the Vice President shall assume the Presidency for the remainder of the term, and an election shall be held as per the guidelines set forth below in order to determine the new Vice President.

- h) The Secretary shall attend the meetings with the President and Vice President. He or she records proceedings and is responsible for documenting meeting agendas, minutes and any information received from the club. The Secretary is also responsible for correspondence that does not fall under the direct jurisdiction of the President or Vice President.

- i) The Treasurer shall maintain accurate financial records, and monitor general fundraising activities. The Treasurer will be directly responsible for collecting, managing and allocating funds by way of dues, grants, donations and admission to events sponsored by Fuerza Latina. The Treasurer shall NOT be solely responsible for the grant writing process, as per Article III Section 1 Part e.

- j) The Community Social Chair shall act as a liaison between the Harvard Community and the Latino community at large. Responsibilities include researching, designing, and communicating opportunities for interaction and public service.

- k) The Publicity Social Chair shall be responsible for publicizing all Fuerza Latina events to the Harvard Community and beyond. The Publicity Social chair should be able to organize “poster runs” as well as maintain relations with organizations on other campuses in order to facilitate the publicizing of events sponsored by Fuerza Latina.

- l) The Student Activities Committee Representative is the contact person for local, regional, and national organizations. He or she is responsible for attending the Harvard Foundation meetings.

Article IV- Elections

Section 1-General Elections

- a) General elections will be held for the offices of the Executive Board once a year. Under normal circumstances, the election process shall begin at the general meeting (see Article V Section 1 Part a for definition of General Meeting) prior to leaving for Spring Break. At this time, the existing Executive Board is responsible for communicating to the membership the roles and responsibilities for each of the positions on the Fuerza Latina Executive Board. The roles should also be made publicly available (e.g. via email, and or the website).

- b) After the roles have been clearly defined and conveyed to the general membership, the acting President shall hold nominations for each of the positions, abiding by the following guidelines:
 - 1. No one person may nominate himself or herself.
 - 2. Every nomination must have at least one person to second the motion.
 - 3. Every nomination must be accepted by the nominee before the nominee may be placed on the ballot.
 - 4. No nominee may run uncontested.

- c) The nominees shall be permitted 2 weeks to prepare a 3-5 minute presentation to the general membership. At the second general meeting after Spring Break, the nominees for each position shall present to the membership, and then leave the room and allow votes to be cast.

- d) The winner of each vote must have a simple majority (defined as more votes than any other candidate) of the votes. In the event of a tie, the existing Executive Board and the membership may privately (not in the presence of candidates) hold a run-off between the tied candidates, with the winner determined by simple majority.

Section 2- Elections to Fill Vacancies

The procedure for filling vacancies will be the same as those set forth in Article IV Section 1, with the exception that they will take place as soon as the position becomes available.

Article V- Meetings

General membership meetings will be held weekly, for the purpose of determining policies, activities, programs, and official business. All of the membership of Fuerza Latina should be notified in advance of the day, time, in place of the general meeting. They should be a minimum of four general meetings each term.

- a) The meetings will be chaired by the President of Fuerza Latina, or in his absence, by the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Social Chairs, in that order. The acting President can transfer the chair to the next in line temporarily whenever he considers it necessary.
- b) The Executive Board shall prepare an agenda for the meeting in advance, stating all topics to be discussed. At the end of the meeting the President will allow for other announcements to be made by members or other approved persons.
- c) The Secretary, or other member present in his or her absence, shall take the minutes of the meeting. They will include all subjects discussed, and any decisions taken by the organization along with results of all votes taken. These minutes shall be made publicly available to the general membership.

Article VI- Quorum

Quorum will be defined for Fuerza Latina as fifteen percent of the official voting members of Fuerza Latina defined in Article II Section 3 of the Constitution.

Article VII- Amendments to the Constitution

The Constitution, after it is ratified, may only be amended in the following way:

- a) At a general membership meeting, a motion will be presented to propose an amendment to the Constitution. This motion will be discussed, changed if desired, and voted upon as any other motion. If the motion passes by simple majority, the amendment will then be considered to be officially proposed to the organization. Another general membership meeting must then be scheduled for the final vote on the amendment.
- b) The membership shall be made aware of the final proposed amendment, and shall have the opportunity to vote on its enactment. The membership must be made aware well in advance of the location and time of the general meeting to vote on the amendment's ratification.
- c) At the meeting, the amendment must be approved by two thirds of those present. There must be quorum at the time of the final vote.