

Constitution of the Harvard College Queer Student and Allies (QSA)

Drafted and ratified by the QSA Executive Board on 1/19/1997. Last amended 3/1/2012.

Article I. Name

The name of the organization shall be 'The Harvard College Queer Student 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 Harvard College Queer Students and Allies (QSA) is a resource organization concerned with improving the visibility, strength, and support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and allied students, initiatives, organizations, and communities, in recognition of the marginalization that exists as the result of stigmatized identities. This group seeks to promote community and awareness of and be a resource with respect to the social, socioeconomic, political, educational, and cultural issues surrounding queer identities and sexualities in the form of events driven toward creating safe spaces in collaboration with other groups, institutions, and communities.

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. 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 3. Any member may resign at any time before the end of their membership duration by filing a written resignation (on paper or via email) with the Secretary of the QSA Executive Board.

Section 4. Membership definition. Students of Harvard College may become members in one of two ways: by attending the full duration of a weekly planning meeting and one other event or by attending three events per semester. This is to encourage members to become active in shaping the directions and events of the QSA. All members of the Executive Board are considered members.

Sub-Section 4a. Membership duration. Once a member has fulfilled the one of the above criteria, they are considered members for the remainder of the academic

year. However, for the elections purposes, events towards membership accumulate over one semester only. I.e. attending an event in the fall semester cannot count for eligibility to run/vote in the spring semester elections. Hence, a member who fulfilled one of the above criteria in the fall semester but not the spring semester would still be eligible to attend events targeting members (e.g. members-only party), but would not be able to run or vote in elections until one of the criteria is reached again for the spring semester specifically.

Sub-Section 4b. Definition of membership-eligible events. All events officially organized or co-sponsored by the QSA as an organization can count towards membership, as explained in Section 4. Events may include, but are not limited to: committee meetings, movie screenings, rallies, parties, protests, meetings with administration, mixers, workshops, talks, open forums, artistic performances, and pre-professional events. There is an understanding amongst all members that attendance-taking may be imperfect at large-scale events such as parties, so it is the responsibility of the individual member to sign in at such events while the event organizers need to make sure sign-in is available in a timely manner.

Sub-Section 4c. Petition for missed attendance. If a member attended an event but attendance was not properly recorded then, ze may petition to have attendance recorded for membership purposes by writing the Secretary within two weeks of the event. A Board member may also petition on a student's behalf within two weeks of the event. Either way, at least three Board members must confirm the attendance in question in order for the petition to be successful.

Sub-Section 4d. Membership addition procedures at election time. Due to sensitivities around the election period, no petitions for missed attendance will be considered once the Secretary has sent out the call for nominations. No new members will be added after the call for nominations has been sent, except for those who are fulfilling their final membership requirement during this time (e.g. an event after having already attended a planning meeting, or a third event).

Section 5. Committee membership definition. All those who attend at least two meetings of a specific committee become a member of that committee. The committee member is thus eligible to vote on statement endorsements by that committee. All committee members must also fulfill and adhere to membership criteria for all of QSA as outlined above in Sections 1–4.

Section 6. Membership privileges. QSA members can stand for and vote in elections as long as the policies of Article V are properly followed. QSA members are also eligible to attend member-specific events that non-members do not have access to.

Section 7. QSA-members list. The “QSA-members” email list shall be populated almost entirely of current QSA members. Other friends and allies of the QSA may be added at the discretion of the Executive Board, but these individuals are simply mailing list

subscribers and do not hold the same standing and voting privileges as members of the QSA.

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, and shall ensure all programming adheres to the mission directives as outlined in Article II of this constitution. 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 building and maintaining relationships with other relevant organizations on campus. 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 responsibilities than their fellow Co-Chair.

Section 5. The Diversity Chairs shall be responsible for organizing events and outreach to build community amongst LGBTQ students of all genders and backgrounds, in recognition of the challenges in intersectionalities. The Diversity Chairs shall strive to ensure that the full diversity of the LGBTQ student community along gender, cultural, ideological, religious, and other dimensions are well expressed within the QSA. The Diversity Chairs shall be responsible for maintaining regular links with off-campus LGBTQ student groups and community organizations to the extent possible. The Gender Diversity chair and Cultural Diversity chair will together lead the Events and Outreach Committee. Both Diversity Chairs may divide their responsibilities as they and the Executive Board find appropriate, according to interest, experience, and timing, but they shall assume the positions aware of these broad charges. Recognizing that those who are male-identified have been more visible and represented in the queer community at large, the Gender Diversity Chair shall be chiefly responsible for encouraging the participation and representation of those who may not self-identify as male within the QSA. Recognizing the full cultural and ideological spectrum of the LGBTQ community and the challenges that come with these intersectionalities, the Cultural Diversity Chair shall be chiefly responsible for encouraging the participation and representation of people of different cultural and ideological backgrounds within the QSA.

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 Google calendar with QSA events. The Secretary shall be responsible for moderating the membership of the “QSA-announce” e-mail list. The Secretary shall be responsible for tracking attendance of general members. However, it is the responsibility of each event organizer (board member or not), to provide the Secretary with an accurate attendance list with all necessary information (full name, email, year, Harvard affiliation, etc). The Secretary shall be responsible for the maintenance of the “QSA-Members” email list. The secretary shall ensure that the QSA Executive Board and general members abide by the Constitution. The secretary shall be responsible for all tasks related to the set-up, running of, and follow-ups of all QSA elections with the support of the two Co-Chairs, including (but not limited to) those listed here: advertising and managing nominations, creating ballots, verifying membership at entrance to elections, counting ballots, announcing the results, and collecting the contact information of all candidates so the QSA board can follow-up accordingly.

Section 8. The Political Chairs shall be responsible for ensuring that awareness about the intersection of LGBT and political issues is maintained on campus. The Political Chairs shall facilitate discourse on campus for the purpose of raising visibility around the issues facing the Harvard LGBT community. They shall maintain communication and work in partnership with other campus organizations to ensure that LGBT issues are addressed 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 at least three (3) major events per semester. The Social Chairs shall organize social meetings that will reinforce and create membership solidarity and create safe spaces for queer, questioning, and allied individuals. Furthermore, the QSA Social Chairs are responsible for building and promoting relationships between the QSA and other organizations on campus. 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 Communications 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 Communications Chair shall create and be in charge of printing/distributing all on-line advertisements, posters, and email blurbs related to QSA events. The Communications Chair shall maintain working relationships with relevant media, including, but not limited to, *The Harvard Crimson*. The Communications 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. The Communications Chair shall be responsible for the building of relationships with and dissemination of information to the QSA as well as other groups both on- and off-campus.

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 two-semester terms by the members of the QSA. Membership is defined according to Article III, and all members of the QSA in good standing may each have one vote if present at the elections. Elections for the positions of Co-Chairs (2), Diversity Chair, Treasurer, Publicity Chair, Social Chair, and Political Chair will be held during the months of November and April.

Sub-Section 1a. Office term duration. The term of Office for Co-Chairs, Diversity Chair, Treasurer, Social Chair, Secretary, Communications Chair, and Political Chair will begin on the day following the last day of the academic semester during which the elections take place and will terminate on the last day of the second academic semester of their elected term. Board members may run for re-election without term limits. Newly-elected board members are expected to attend board functions and meetings after elections until the end of the semester in which the elections are held to foster knowledge transfer. However, the newly-elected Board members will not assume voting powers until the actual start of their term as outlined here.

Sub-Section 1b. Rotating system. To ensure that each newly elected Diversity Chair, Social Chair, and Political Chair shall have an experienced partner whenever possible, elections shall be run on a “rotating system,” in which the Executive Board strives to have one chair with at least one semester of previous experience. Therefore, optimally, each election, only one new Diversity Chair, one new Social Chair, and one new Political Chair will be elected, and one each of the previous Diversity Chairs, Social Chairs, and Political Chairs will remain on the Board for that semester for guidance purposes. This rotating system may be altered at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Section 2. Candidate eligibility. For all positions other than Co-Chair, any member of the QSA in good standing who will be on-campus for the full term of office is eligible to run. Candidates may not run for more than one position in a single election.

Sub-Section 2a. Co-Chair candidate eligibility. For the Co-Chair position, only members of the QSA in good standing who have served as a voting member of the Executive Board for at least one full semester is eligible, in order to ensure experience and continuity. However, board members whose terms have only started the semester of the vote are still eligible to run for Co-Chair provided they have served since the very beginning of the semester.

Section 3. Elections shall span approximately 12 days, placed within each semester at the discretion of the Board but always with at least two full weeks remaining prior to reading period. Those 12 days shall consist of:

Sub-Section 3a. A Nomination Period spanning at least five 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. The Secretary shall announce the opening of nominations and information regarding open positions as well as the elections calendar. At this time, the Secretary shall notify all members eligible to run or vote as outlined in Article III.

Sub-Section 3b. A Statement Submission Period spanning four days, in which nominees shall submit their candidacy statements to the Secretary, who will

review each statement for error with the candidate prior to the Membership Review Period.

Sub-Section 3c. A Membership Review Period spanning at least four days, in which the QSA Membership shall review candidacy statements. The Secretary shall send the full list of candidates and their statements over the “QSA-members” email list.

Sub-Section 3d. In-Person Elections. The exact order of events is at the discretion at the Executive Board, but must include the following components:

- Up to 2 minutes for each candidate for the Co-Chair position to introduce themselves and explain their platforms
- Up to 8 minutes of Q&A between members and each candidate for Co-Chair on issues of their platform
- Up to 8 minutes of deliberation on Co-Chair candidates amongst members without candidates present in order to fully explore different aspects of the candidates’ platforms and records
- Up to 1 minute for each candidate of all other positions to introduce themselves and explain their platforms
- Up to 3 minutes of Q&A between members and each candidate for all other positions on issues of their platform

Sub-Section 3e. Absentee voting. Absentee voting is discouraged in order to maximize the benefits of meeting candidates in-person and the opportunities for Q&A at the in-person elections. In the case of extenuating circumstances, a member of the QSA in good standing may petition the Executive Board for absentee voting at a weekly planning meeting at least one week prior to the in-person elections. The member must explain the circumstances requiring absentee voting and the request must be approved by a unanimous vote of the Executive Board. Absentee vote must be submitted on paper in a sealed and signed envelope to the Secretary prior to the start of the in-person elections but no earlier than 24 hours following the release of all candidate statements.

Section 4. Vote Determination. All members of the QSA in good standing shall have one vote. Absentee votes on paper collected by the Secretary shall be counted at the same time as the votes in-person. A plurality of a vote of no confidence will disqualify a candidate from being granted a position, even if ze runs unopposed. A plurality of votes cast within the Voting Period shall determine the recipient of the position. At the end of Elections, the Secretary shall be responsible for announcing the results to the QSA Membership within one week after close of elections.

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. Committee meetings shall be held weekly immediately following Executive Board meetings, preferably in the same location.

Section 3. 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 4. 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 Diversity Chairs shall conduct the meeting.

Section 5. The Secretary shall record minutes of all Executive Board meetings. In the absence of the Secretary, the Communications Chair shall take the meeting minutes.

Section 6. The Co-Chairs shall communicate notice of Executive Board meetings. The Communications Chair shall communicate notice of community meetings and social meetings.

Section 7. The Secretary shall record attendance, to be placed in the meeting notes, at every meeting of the Executive Board and committee meeting.

Article VII. Final Reports and Membership Evaluations

Section 1. At the end of a board member's term, a Final Report shall be written if the position is one where the co-chairs are not staggered, or where the position is unique on the Executive Board (eg. Treasurer, Secretary, Communications Chair). 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 beginning of each semester, the Co-chairs shall conduct a general interest survey, to gauge the interests and desired programming of the broader LGBTQ community at Harvard College (beyond the QSA). This survey will be sent over all relevant lists. At the end of each semester, the Co-Chairs shall conduct an evaluation survey, to be sent over only the QSA-Members list, in order to gauge how the Executive Board is responding to the concerns and wants of the QSA member constituency. 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. 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: Trans Task Force, GirlSpot

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 Diversity Chairs before the end of Nomination Period. The Diversity 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 Diversity 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 Diversity 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 X. 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 compromised only of current Chairs, active Freshman Reps, and one Chair from each subcommittee.

Article XI. Endorsements and Statements

Section 1. Endorsements or statements for petitions, letters to the Crimson and other forms of causes (hereby referred to simply as statements) are approved or created when the QSA wishes to clarify its position on a particular issue. This includes endorsements for UC elections. There are no qualifying criteria for the position or issue to be approved or rejected by the QSA membership as long as the exercise is permissible within the laws and rules of Harvard College and the government.

Section 2. Voting procedure. All statements can only be voted in-person at weekly planning meetings, and must be announced via email at least 48 hours prior to the vote so all members can be informed participants. All members of the QSA in good standing can vote with one vote each. Board members vote with one vote each. The approval of a statement requires a two-thirds super-majority. In the case of a tie, the side supported by a plurality of board members wins. In the case of a further tie, the Co-Chairs will cast the deciding votes.

Section 3. Presentation procedure. Any member of the QSA in good standing can draft and present a statement for approval. A statement from a non-member may be considered only if the non-member attends the vote during the planning meeting to explain.

Section 4. Committee statements. Committees may not issue statements separately from the QSA as a whole, but committees may present a statement for consideration by the wider QSA in alignment with the guidelines listed above.

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.