

# OIST Student Assembly – Terms of Reference

OIST Student Council

September 2020

The following shall be the Terms of Reference of the Student Assembly of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University, hereinafter referred to as either ‘this SA’ or ‘the SA’. The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University shall hereinafter be referred to as either ‘OIST’ or ‘the University’.

The OIST Student Assembly is a self-governing institution and the content of this document is defined at the discretion of the OIST Student Assembly.

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## ARTICLE 1 – OBJECTIVES

1. The objectives of this SA shall be the furtherance of the interests of its members.
2. In furtherance of the objective stated in paragraph 1, the SA shall act as a channel of communication between its members and the governing bodies of this University.

## ARTICLE 2 – MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership shall comprise of all OIST students, special research students, visiting research students, junior research fellows, science communication fellows, and research interns, keeping terms.
2. Non-members, visiting research students, science communication fellows, and interns shall be unable to vote in meetings of this SA and may not stand for offices or vote in elections pertaining to offices of this SA.
3. Members shall have the right to opt out of the SA by writing to the SA Chair, stating their intention.

## ARTICLE 3 – OFFICERS

1. The following shall be the officers of this SA. They should attend all SA meetings:

- (a) The Student Council (SC):
    - i. is the group of executive officers of the SA;
    - ii. will engage with OIST with the aim of supporting members of the SA in the fulfillment of their OIST-related goals;
    - iii. will strive to accurately convey the concerns and opinions of SA members to the third parties it interacts with; and
    - iv. will consist of:
      - A. The Chair;
      - B. The Secretary;
      - C. The Communications Officer;
      - D. The Academic Officer;
      - E. The Welfare Officer;
      - F. The Diversity Officer;
      - G. The Health and Safety Officer;
      - H. The Faculty Assembly Representative; and
      - I. The Events Officer.
  - (b) Non-executive Officers:
    - i. are not members of the SC, but can act in a role of support to the SC and will report directly to the SA; and
    - ii. will consist of:
      - A. The IT Officer;
      - B. The Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Representatives;
      - C. The Culture and External Relations Representative;
      - D. The CDC Representative; and
      - E. The Sustainability Representative.
  - (c) The Constitutional Officer:
    - i. is not a member of the SC and will act as the judiciary of this SA; and
    - ii. holds no other elected office in this SA.
2. All Officers are elected from SA members for yearly terms unless stated otherwise. The election procedures are detailed in Appendix 2.
  3. Executive officers can act as a collective and may help each other in their roles, at the discretion of the individual officers.
  4. All Executive Officers are required to attend all Student Council meetings, called at the discretion of the Chair, and other SA members may attend at the discretion of the Chair.
  5. One person shall not hold two executive positions at the same time, with the exception of emergency substitutions, at the discretion of the SC.
  6. The SA should strive to achieve a level of diversity in the SC which reflects that of the full student body.
  7. All officers of this SA have a duty to:
    - (a) uphold the good name of this SA;
    - (b) serve all its members with civility, respect, and decency;
    - (c) maintain professionalism and, when needed, confidentiality when engaging with SA members;
    - (d) use its assets, facilities, property, and finances solely for the pursuit of the Objectives of this SA, as defined in Article 1;
    - (e) take reasonable steps to ensure that other members of this SA use its assets, facilities, property, and finances solely for the pursuit of the Objectives of this SA, as defined in Article 1;

- (f) take reasonable steps to ensure that its assets, facilities, property, and finances are used for the benefit of the whole membership of the SA, as defined in Article 3;
- (g) use their powers solely for the purposes for which they were conferred;
- (h) make no personal material gain which derives from the powers, responsibilities, privileges, or any other aspects of the office conferred to them; and
- (i) take reasonable steps to ensure that all other officers of this SA make no personal material gain which derives from the powers, responsibilities, privileges, or any other aspects of the office conferred to them.

8. The duties of the Chair.

- (a) The Chair shall be responsible for:
  - i. calling meetings of this SA and SC;
  - ii. updating the SA and the SC on OIST developments;
  - iii. informing the relevant SC members of appropriate meetings and academic issues;
  - iv. presiding over the SA and SC meeting and ensuring a balanced debate. Subject to this condition, limitations of speeches and/or discussions shall be at the discretion of the Chair;
  - v. writing the agenda for SA meetings; and
  - vi. giving the Welcome Speech during the Welcome Ceremony for the incoming class.
- (b) This list of responsibilities is not exhaustive as the Chair may need to represent the SA in other areas.

9. The duties of the Secretary.

- (a) The Secretary shall be responsible for:
  - i. arranging the SA and SC meetings, which includes but is not limited to:
    - A. announcing the SA and SC meeting to its participants, at least one week before named meetings;
    - B. booking the venue for the named meetings; and
    - C. circulating the agenda for SA meetings by email to all members at least twenty-four hours before every meeting;
  - ii. keeping minutes of meetings of the SA and of the SC. Taking minutes in other SC meetings will fall under the responsibility of attendees to such meetings and may be redistributed at the discretion of the SC;
  - iii. maintaining the private records of the SA in a private database and maintaining an appropriately accessible public database online, with the help of the IT Officer;
  - iv. the treasury of the SA, including but not limited to:
    - A. safekeeping and accounting for monies received and expended by the SA; and
    - B. presenting a written report on the state of SA finances at the last SA meeting of each term.
  - v. conducting the correspondence of the SC.

10. The duties of the Communications Officer.

- (a) The Communications Officer shall be responsible for:
  - i. working closely with the Executive and Non-executive officers to ensure effective communication between the SC and the Student Assembly;

- ii. managing the SA website and maintaining a SC/SA social media presence, which includes but is not limited to:
    - A. posting updates about past and upcoming meetings of the SC with the governing bodies of OIST; and
    - B. posting informal reminders about Student Assembly Meetings, Student Committee activities, etc.
  - iii. conducting and galvanizing student informational campaigns.
- (b) The Communications Officer may form and chair the Communications Student Committee, at the Officer's discretion.
11. The duties of the Academic Officer.
- (a) The Academic Officer shall be responsible for:
- i. liaising with the Graduate School regarding academic affairs and assisting the SA in academic related matters pertaining to the academic program, including but not limited to:
    - A. laboratory rotations;
    - B. academic courses;
    - C. professional and career development courses;
    - D. internship program matters;
    - E. seminars, policies, and information regarding students choosing a thesis laboratory;
    - F. examinations such as the thesis proposal examination and thesis defense;
    - G. Annual Research Progress Review Meetings;
    - H. PhD program extensions;
    - I. post-graduation programs such as the Junior Research Fellowship;
    - J. admissions procedures and policies;
    - K. academic-related student travel and leave, for example conference travel;
    - L. policies, procedures, and issues with supervisors and academic mentors; and
    - M. student feedback on academic-related matters.
  - ii. calling for student panel meetings, where such meetings shall seek to inform current students on academic matters.
- (b) While carrying out their role, the Academic Officer shall:
- i. obtain feedback to the best of their abilities (and clearly state when they could not) from all relevant demographics including but not limited to:
    - A. different academic years;
    - B. family status;
    - C. educational background;
    - D. cultural background;
    - E. gender identity; and
    - F. residency status.
  - ii. actively engage with the relevant demographics for timely feedback, discussion, and resolution of tasks through the use of public forums, committees, working groups, etc., at the officer's discretion.
12. The duties of the Welfare Officer.
- (a) The Welfare Officer shall be responsible for:
- i. being a port of call for students with welfare issues;

- ii. liaising with the Ganjuu Well-being service regarding welfare issues and relevant projects;
  - iii. liaising with a representative from the Peer Support Program regarding any recurrent concerns of students; and
  - iv. coordinating student welfare projects, including but not limited to:
    - A. the Student Buddy System; and
    - B. the Peer Support Program.
  - v. liaising with the Graduate School regarding student welfare and support issues, including but not limited to:
    - A. student financial support;
    - B. welfare-related student travel and leave, for example non-study leave; and
    - C. policies and procedures concerning students' mental health.
  - (b) It is recommended that the Welfare Officer complete the Peer Support Training to better aid with their responsibilities;
  - (c) The Welfare Officer may form and chair the Welfare Student Committee, at the Officer's discretion.
13. The duties of the Diversity Officer.
- (a) The Diversity Officer shall be responsible for:
    - i. coordinating student efforts to promote diversity and inclusion for all members of the OIST community;
    - ii. liaising with the diversity section or sections regarding diversity issues and relevant projects;
    - iii. organising events that promote a culture of acceptance and discussion among the OIST community with regards to the diversity of human identity, culture, and experience;
    - iv. advocating for the needs and interests of the under-represented groups, both at OIST, in the sciences, and in positions of authority more broadly, at all SC and SA meetings;
      - A. Examples of under-represented groups include but are not limited to: women, racial and ethnic minorities, individuals from lower-income or non-academic socio-economic backgrounds, non-native English speakers, the LGBTQAI+ community, religious groups, student parents, non-traditional students.
    - v. acting as student representative to the OIST Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee; and
    - vi. reporting back to the SC and SA meetings on relevant matters.
  - (b) The Diversity Officer may form and chair the Diversity Student Committee, at the Officer's discretion.
14. The duties of the Health and Safety Officer.
- (a) The Health and Safety Officer shall be responsible for:
    - i. acting as student representative to Health and Safety Committee meetings;
    - ii. representing the interests of the SA members on safety related matters;
    - iii. coordinating initiatives aimed at increasing safety awareness and education, as well as improving safety policy, emanating from and directed at the SA; and
    - iv. reporting back to the SC and SA meetings on relevant matters.
  - (b) The Health and Safety Officer may form and chair the Health and Safety Student Committee, at the Officer's discretion.

15. The duties of the Faculty Assembly Representative.
  - (a) The Faculty Assembly Representative shall be responsible for:
    - i. acting as non-voting student representative to the OIST Faculty Assembly (FA);
    - ii. reporting back to the SC and SA meetings on relevant matters; and
    - iii. relaying motions from the SA to the FA.
  - (b) The Faculty Assembly Representative will be joined in FA meetings by another executive officer of this SA, at the discretion of the SC.
16. The duties of the Events Officer.
  - (a) The Events Officer shall be responsible for:
    - i. acting as a student representative for the Graduation Ceremony and Welcome Ceremony Committee;
    - ii. liaising with the Admissions and Registrar Section of the Graduate School regarding admissions and recruiting including but not limited to recruiting and admissions events;
    - iii. liaising with the Recreation Section of University Community Services Division on matters pertaining to student events;
    - iv. coordinating with Academic, Welfare, and Diversity Officers for events that promote community, well-being, and inclusion;
    - v. coordinating the appointment of the Graduation Ball Committee and its Chair; and
    - vi. arranging welcome events for incoming students and interns.
  - (b) The Events Officer may form and chair an Events Committee, at the Officer's discretion.
17. The duties of the IT Officer.
  - (a) The IT Officer shall be responsible for:
    - i. acting as student representative to IT Committee and Scientific Computing Committee meetings; and
    - ii. reporting back to the SA meetings on relevant matters.
18. The duties of the Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) Representatives.
  - (a) The GEDI Representatives shall be responsible for:
    - i. acting as student representatives to the OIST Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee;
    - ii. reporting back to the SA meetings on relevant matters; and
    - iii. representing the rights and interests of SA members of all gender expressions and diverse backgrounds.
  - (b) The position shall be split between two persons, and the SA will strive to fill these positions with persons of diverse identities;
  - (c) In case neither representative can partake in an OIST GEDI Committee meeting, the SC shall be informed and a replacement chosen from the SA members.
  - (d) GEDI Representatives are elected for two-year terms, with staggered elections so that each year one representative is elected. The staggered election procedure shall be determined by the Constitutional Officer.
19. The duties of the Culture and External Relations Representative.
  - (a) The Culture and External Relations Representative shall be responsible for:

- i. acting as student representative to Culture Committee meetings;
  - ii. liaising with the Communication and Public Relations Division and acting in the cultural interest of the student body;
  - iii. acting as a representative of the SA in relations with other universities and student organisations; and
  - iv. reporting back to the SA meetings on relevant matters.
- 20. The duties of the CDC Representative.
  - (a) The CDC Representative shall be responsible for:
    - i. acting as student representative to the Child Development Center (CDC) Board of Governors; and
    - ii. reporting back to the SA meetings on relevant matters.
  - (b) Due to the nature of the CDC and in accordance with the rules and regulation of the CDC Board of Governors, the CDC Representative will be elected for two-year terms by SA members that are parents.
- 21. The duties of the Sustainability Representative.
  - (a) The Sustainability Representative shall be responsible for:
    - i. liaising with OIST sections involved with sustainability initiatives; and
    - ii. gathering opinions of the Student Assembly and report results of meetings to the SC and, when called, SA meetings.
- 22. The duties of the Constitutional Officer.
  - (a) The Constitutional Officer shall be the sole interpreter of these Terms of Reference.
  - (b) The Constitutional Officer shall oversee all elections and handle electoral complaints.
  - (c) The Constitutional Officer shall form and chair the Scrutiny Committee, as needed.
    - i. The Scrutiny Committee shall:
      - A. pursue received complaints they deem serious or which the affected parties wish to pursue further; and
      - B. aid the Constitutional Officer in resolving complaints and mediating dispute resolution meetings between affected parties.
    - ii. The Scrutiny Committee shall consist of five members, selected after the incident, that have no conflict of interest regarding the involved parties.
    - iii. Members should reflect the full diversity of the Student Assembly, including a member from each academic year.
  - (d) The Constitutional Officer shall form an Election Commission afresh for each election, after nominations have closed:
    - i. The Election Commission shall consist of at least three members, including the Constitutional Officer, that have no conflict of interest regarding the involved parties.
    - ii. Members should reflect the full level of diversity in the student body, including members from each class.
  - (e) The Constitutional Officer shall be responsible for:
    - i. coordinating a mid-term and end-of-year reports to the SA;
    - ii. organising a Constitutional Survey, at least once a year, to gather student feedback on the SC and proposed amendments to these Terms of Reference; and

- iii. organising a yearly Constitutional Retreat to discuss the results of the Constitutional Survey and decide whether these Terms of Reference should be amended.
      - A. The Constitutional Retreat should be attended by all executive and non-executive officers of the Student Assembly.
- 23. Executive Officers may be replaced in their duties as student representatives to confidential meetings (such as the FA meeting) only by another Executive Officer, who shall be chosen by the SC.
- 24. Breach of duties by SA Officers.
  - (a) Any officer, who is deemed by the Constitutional Officer to have consistently failed in carrying out their duties shall be subject to a vote of no confidence.
  - (b) Any member of this SA who, for any reason, considers that an officer of this SA is no longer fit for duty, may ask the Constitutional Officer to bring a vote of no confidence against them, provided that they
    - i. state clearly the reason for which the vote is brought; and
    - ii. are seconded by any other member of this SA.
  - (c) Any member of this SA who, for any reason, considers that the Constitutional Officer is no longer fit for duty, may ask the Chair to bring a vote of no confidence against them, provided that they
    - i. state clearly the reason for which the vote is brought; and
    - ii. are seconded by any other member of this SA.
  - (d) A vote of no confidence shall require a two thirds majority to pass.
  - (e) Should a motion of no confidence pass, fresh elections will be called as per the standing orders.

#### ARTICLE 4 – MEETINGS

1. This SA shall assemble for:
  - (a) Monthly meetings, usually on the first Friday of each month; and
  - (b) Extraordinary meetings, at the discretion of the Chair.
2. Meetings of this SA shall be presided by the Chair. In the event that they are unable to act, meetings will be presided by the most senior officer present.
3. The Chair shall ensure that meetings of the SA are held according to these Terms of Reference.
4. All members of this SA shall have full voting powers at meetings of this SA.
5. No absentee voting at SA meetings shall be allowed.
6. In an emergency, the Chair with the agreement of the Secretary may call an extraordinary meeting of this SA with at least one day's notice being given to the SA in the normal fashion. The agenda shall be posted at the same time that the meeting shall be called. Discussion shall be limited to those matters for which the meeting has been called.

#### ARTICLE 5 – AMENDMENTS

1. Changes affecting these Terms of Reference require the assent by vote of SA members.
2. The vote will be deemed valid if at least one-half of SA members participate in the vote.
3. The proposed changes are passed if approved by at least two-thirds of the voters.



4. The SC will ensure that optimal procedures are followed to allow proper public discussion prior to the vote.
5. The SC will ensure that optimal procedures are followed to encourage maximal participation of SA members in the vote.

## APPENDIX 1 – COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

1. Student Committees shall be convened if it is desired by the Chair, relevant officers, SA, or by requirement of these Terms of Reference.
  - (a) Student Committees shall be permanent groups, consisting of any interested member of the SA; and
  - (b) Student Committees should have an executive officer of the SA as its appointed chair who reports to the SC and the SA.
2. Working groups shall be formed and disbanded at the discretion of the SA, as necessary.
  - (a) Working groups shall be temporary groups, directed at specific student issues and aimed at improving current policy that influences student matters;
  - (b) Working groups shall consist of any interested member of the SA; and
  - (c) Working groups should have an appointed chair who reports to the SC and the SA.

## APPENDIX 2 – ELECTION OF SA OFFICERS

### SECTION 1 – GENERAL

1. The following shall be the procedure for the election of SA Officers as listed in Article Three, Paragraph 1 of these Terms of Reference.

### SECTION 2 – ELECTIONS

1. The date(s) of an election, the date of hustings for an election, the date of the opening of nominations for an election, and the date and time of the close of nominations for an election shall be decided by the SC within the rules as outlined in this Appendix.
2. The SC shall give notice of an election at least a month prior to the first day of voting.
3. The election of officers of this SA shall take place during yearly elections. Election procedures should begin at the start of the second academic term.
4. The elections of non-executive officers should take place in the month following the election of executive officers.
5. All candidates shall stand for election against Re-Open Nominations (RON).
6. Elected candidates shall start their term in office in the week following the election results.
7. It is the first and last official responsibility of all officers to meet their elected counterparts and exchange all relevant information, documents, working knowledge, and other official material pertinent to the officer's duties.
8. The incoming and outgoing Chairs shall jointly organise a general handover meeting attended by as many elected officers as possible to ensure a smooth transition and continuation of all SC activities.

### SECTION 3 – NOMINATIONS

1. The SC shall open nominations at least one fortnight prior to the hustings for elections.
2. Nominations shall be made to the SC, as instructed. All nominees must be members of this SA. Any member of this SA may propose a nomination.
3. No member of this SA may nominate more than one person for the same office.

4. No member shall be allowed to stand for elections if the remainder of their time at OIST is less than three terms.
5. All nominations must be received one week before the hustings. Any nominations received after this deadline shall be considered void.
6. All nominees must respond within the week before hustings whether they are willing to run for election. In case of multiple nominations, the nominee must decide to run for one position only.

#### SECTION 4 – CONDUCT DURING ELECTIONS

1. Nominees must not harass or bully people into voting for them, nor defame other nominees. Nor may they encourage others to do so on their behalf.
2. Other members of the SA must not harass or bully people into voting for particular nominees, nor defame nominees. Nor may they encourage others to do so.
3. Members of the SC shall not endorse nor defame any particular nominee.
4. Campaigning for RON shall be forbidden.

#### SECTION 5 – HUSTINGS

1. Nominees for all positions are required to hust. If a nominee fails to hust they shall be disqualified from the election, unless prior arrangements are made with the SC under special circumstances.
2. It is the duty of the SC to ensure a fair and equal hearing for all nominees.
3. Before proceedings begin the SC shall make the following rules clear:
  - (a) Each nominee shall make one speech at the beginning of their hust. All nominees may speak for a maximum of three minutes each;
  - (b) Questions shall be addressed to all nominees. Biased questions shall be forbidden. All nominees may speak for a maximum of one minute each;
  - (c) Outgoing officers are required to address at least one question to the candidates running for their office.

#### SECTION 6 – VOTING

1. Any member of the SA may vote for the election of a member of the SA to any executive or non-executive position.
2. The internal OIST groups domain shall be used, requiring login. To guarantee objectivity and impartiality during the election process, the voting process will be anonymized and the creation and management of the ballots shall fall under the responsibilities of the Constitutional Officer.
3. Each voter shall have one single transferable vote in each election.
4. Any abstentions will not be counted in the overall total of votes.
5. Voting shall be open for one week following hustings.

#### SECTION 7 – PROCEDURE IN COUNTING

1. The SC shall receive only the anonymized results of the election.
2. If the vote for any one candidate equals or exceeds the votes of all the other candidates combined, that candidate shall be deemed elected.
3. If no candidate has yet reached a stage whereby the votes cast for them are equal to or exceed the total number of votes cast for all the other candidates combined, the two or more candidates with the least votes shall be excluded if the total vote of such two or more candidates does not exceed the vote of the candidate next above, otherwise the candidate having the fewest votes shall be excluded.

4. The votes of the excluded candidates shall be transferred to whichever of the continuing candidates is marked by that voter as their next available preference, and the votes thus transferred shall be added to the first preference votes of those candidates.
5. Any vote on which no further preference is marked shall be set aside as non-transferable and the total number of such ballot papers shall be recorded.
6. If a candidate has to be excluded when two or more candidates have each the same number of votes and are lowest on the poll, the candidate with the lowest number of votes at the earliest stage in the count, at which the candidates in question had an unequal number of votes, shall be excluded. If two or more candidates are still equal and lowest, the candidate to be excluded shall be decided by lot.
7. This process shall continue, with each exclusion followed by a new round of counting, until the total vote for one candidate equals or exceeds the votes cast for all the other candidates combined. The first candidate for whom the votes cast for them equal or exceed the votes of all the other candidates combined, shall be deemed elected.
8. In the event of a tie between the top candidates at all stages of the count, with all preferential votes taken into account, the SC shall hold a new election as soon as is convenient. In the event of another tie between the same top candidates in the second ballot the winner shall be decided by lot.

#### SECTION 8 – DECLARATION OF RESULTS

1. Results shall be written down on a “Results Sheet” detailing each stage and round of the count. This Results Sheet shall be signed by the SC as an accurate record of the procedure in counting.
2. The results shall be circulated to SA immediately after the count has concluded.
3. Once the results have been announced to the SA, the winning candidates shall be deemed elected.
4. This announcement shall be final and no longer open to challenge by any party.
5. In the event of RON being deemed elected in an election, nominations for the position concerned shall be re-opened, and hustings and a second ballot shall be held as soon as is convenient.

#### SECTION 9 – PROCEDURE FOR FILLING VACANT POSITIONS

1. In the event of a position becoming vacant, the parting officer can be asked to extend their office for another term, until the following elections.
2. In the event of the parting officer declining the extension, at the discretion of the SC the responsibilities of that member may instead be absorbed by the SC. In such a case the Chair shall be in charge of delegating their duties.