

OIST Student Assembly – Terms of Reference

OIST Student Council

October 2016

The following shall be the Terms of Reference of the Student Assembly of the Okinawa Institute for Science and Technology Graduate University, hereinafter referred to as either ‘this SA’ or ‘the SA’. The Okinawa Institute for 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, and interns, keeping terms.
2. Non-members and interns shall be unable to vote in meetings of this SA and may not stand or vote for elections 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) Executive Officers, termed collectively “The Student Council”, shall be elected from SA members for yearly terms and shall administer this SA:
 - i. The Chair;
 - ii. The Treasurer;
 - iii. The Secretary;
 - iv. The Academic Officer;
 - v. The Welfare Officer;
 - vi. The Gender Equality Committee Representatives; and
 - vii. The Faculty Assembly Representatives.
 - (b) Non-executive Officers shall be appointed from SA members by the SC, for yearly terms:
 - i. The IT Officer;
 - ii. The Housing Representative;
 - iii. The Culture Committee Representative; and
 - iv. The Communications Officer.
2. 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.
 3. One person shall not hold two executive position at the same time, with the exception of emergency substitutions, at the discretion of the SC.
 4. All Non-executive Officers are not members of the SC, but will act in a role of support to the SC.
 5. The term of a Non-executive Officer can be extended for another year by mutual agreement between the Non-executive Officer and the SC. This extension has to be endorsed by the SA at the following SA meeting. If the extension is not endorsed, a new Officer shall be appointed.
 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) use her assets, facilities, property and finances solely for the pursuit of the Objectives of this SA, as defined in Article 1;
 - (d) 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;
 - (e) take reasonable steps to ensure that its assets, facilities, property and finances are used for the benefit of the whole membership, as defined in Article 3;
 - (f) use their powers solely for the purposes for which they were conferred;
 - (g) make no personal material gain which derives from the: powers, responsibilities, privileges, or any other aspects of the office conferred to them;
 - (h) 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) The list of responsibilities is not exhaustive as the Chair may need to represent the SA in other areas.
9. The duties of the Treasurer.
- (a) The Treasurer shall be responsible for:
- i. Keeping and accounting for monies received and expended by this SA;
 - ii. Presenting a written report on the state of SA finances at the last SA meeting of each term;
 - iii. Ensuring the independence of the SA accounts; and
 - iv. Coordinating the collection of funds for student events.
- (b) The Treasurer may form a committee to coordinate SA finances if desired.
10. 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 named meetings by email to all members at least twenty-four hours before every meeting;
 - ii. Keeping minutes of meetings of the SA, and 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. Conducting the correspondence of the SC;
 - v. Updating the SA Terms of Reference and making it available on the SA website with the help of the IT officer;
 - vi. Undertaking other administrative duties.
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 which include but not limited to:
 - A. issues with supervisors and academic mentors,
 - B. courses (academic and Professional Development),
 - C. laboratory Rotations,
 - D. gathering feedback.
 - ii. Act as Student Representative on the Educational Committee.
- (b) The Academic Officer may form and chair the Education Student Committee, 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 Wellbeing service regarding welfare issues and relevant projects;
 - iii. Coordinating student welfare projects, including but not limited to:
 - A. the Student Buddy System, and
 - B. the Peer Support Program.
 - (b) The Welfare Officer may form and chair the Welfare Student Committee, at the Officer's discretion.
13. The duties of the Gender Equality Committee Representatives.
- (a) The Gender Equality Committee Representative shall be responsible for:
 - i. acting as student representative to the OIST Gender Equality Committee (GEC),
 - ii. reporting back to the SC and SA meetings on relevant matters, and
 - iii. representing the rights and interests of SA members of all gender expressions.
 - (b) The position shall be split between two persons, and the SA will strive to fill these positions with persons of diverse gender identities;
 - (c) In case neither representative can partake in OIST GEC meeting, the SC shall be informed and a replacement chose from the SC or SA members.
14. The duties of the Faculty Assembly Representatives.
- (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. relay motions from the SA to the FA;
 - (b) The position shall be split between two persons;
 - (c) In case neither representative can partake in the OIST FA meeting, the SC shall be informed and a replacement chose from the SC or SA members.
15. The duties of the IT Officer.
- (a) The IT Officer shall be responsible for:
 - i. acting as student representative to IT Committee meetings;
 - ii. amend and update the SA website in consultation with the SC; and
 - iii. reporting back to the SC and SA meetings on relevant matters.
16. The duties of the Housing Representative.
- (a) The Housing Representative shall be responsible for:
 - i. acting as student representative to Housing Committee meetings; and
 - ii. reporting back to the SC and SA meetings on relevant matters.
17. The duties of the Culture Committee Representative.
- (a) The Culture Committee 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; and
 - iii. reporting back to the SC and SA meetings on relevant matters.
18. 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 body;
 - 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.; and
 - iii. conducting and galvanizing student informational campaigns.

ARTICLE 4 – MEETINGS

1. This SA shall assemble for:
 - (a) Six ordinary meetings per academic year, to be scheduled every other month, usually after the Faculty Assembly;
 - (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 vote participants.
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

SECTION 1 – CONVENING OF THE COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

1. The committees established below in Sections 2–3 shall be convened if it is desired by the Chair, relevant officers, SA, or by requirement of these Terms of Reference.
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 should have an appointed chair who reports to the SC and the SA.

SECTION 2 – THE EDUCATION STUDENT COMMITTEE

1. The Education Student Committee shall support the Academic Officer in managing education related projects and gather student feedback.
2. The Education Student Committee shall consist of any interested members of the SA.
3. The Education Student Committee shall be formed by, presided by and shall meet at the discretion of the Academic Officer.

SECTION 3 – THE WELFARE STUDENT COMMITTEE

1. The Welfare Student Committee assists and supports the Welfare Officer in providing for the welfare and well-being of the student body, in collaboration with the Ganjuu service.
2. The Welfare Student Committee shall consist of any interested members of the SA.
3. The Welfare Student Committee shall be formed by, presided by and shall meet at the discretion of the Welfare Officer, and shall assist in managing related projects.

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 seven full days prior to the first day of voting.
3. The elections for executive officers of this SA shall take place during two yearly elections.
4. All executive officers, except for one Gender Equality Committee Representative and one Faculty Assembly Representative, should be elected by the end of the calendar year.
5. The other Gender Equality Committee Representative and Faculty Assembly Representative should be elected by the end of the academic year.
6. Elected candidates shall serve in office for one year from the start of the following academic term.

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. Current SC members cannot be nominated for a position if its term overlaps with their current term.
6. All nominations must be received one week before the hustings. Any nominations received after this deadline shall be considered void.
7. 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 other nominees. Nor may they encourage others to do so.
3. Members of the SC shall not endorse nor defame any particular nominee.

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 disallowed. All nominees may speak for a maximum of one minute each.

SECTION 6 – VOTING

1. Any Member of the SA may vote for the election of a member of the SA to any 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 be outsourced to a qualified OIST member who is not part of this SA.
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 when a candidate has to be excluded, 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 him/her 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.

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 declines 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.