



## 51gsc.10.1

INTRODUCED AT THE FEBRUARY, 2005 GSC GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING  
TO BE VOTED ON AT THE MARCH, 2005 GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

### ***Amendment to the Association of Student Activities (ASA) Description in the GSC Bylaws, to Replace the ASA Constitution***

#### **Summary and purpose of this amendment:**

The Association of Student Activities (ASA) faces a need to be redefined so that it might better fulfill its role as a voice for student groups and a joint committee of the GSC and the Undergraduate Association (UA). Despite its role as a joint committee of the GSC and UA, the ASA is governed by its own constitution. This amendment proposes to eliminate the ASA constitution and replace it with a set of Bylaws (for both the GSC and UA) and a set of operating guidelines.

The following issues are addressed through this change:

1. Vagueness and contradictions  
The ASA constitution says nothing of its role with respect to the GSC and UA, and it is currently very much possible for the GSC bylaws and ASA constitutions to contradict each other. Incorporating ASA definitions directly into the GSC bylaws fixes this.
2. Support for the ASA  
Currently, it is difficult for the ASA to get the type of support it needs from either the GSC or the UA. This is due mostly to the vagueness issues and also the fact that GSC and UA are not involved at all in decision-making processes, and are therefore unable to provide any support for decisions made. By making the GSC and UA involved in an appeals process, as is done in this amendment, both groups will be able to offer the ASA the support it needs. Also, a clarified definition of the ASA's relationship with the two groups allows the GSC and UA to hold ASA accountable, and thus offer it as much support as would be given to their other committees.
3. Efficiency  
The ASA faces many problems in being as efficient as it would like to be, which is detrimental to student groups. Part of this problem can be solved by giving it more support, as described above. Another major factor, though, is that changing how the ASA operates requires passing it through a General Body Meeting of student groups, which are held only once every semester or so, and which many student groups do not attend or want to attend. By splitting the Constitution into two parts, and giving more flexibility to the ASA Executive Board over its operating guidelines, we will make the ASA much more efficient and flexible. This follows the model of other GSC committees such as the Muddy Charles Pub, which have their core definitions within the GSC Bylaws, but maintain a distinct set of operating guidelines that are easier to change.

#### **Major changes:**

- o Replace ASA constitution with GSC/UA Bylaws and ASA operating guidelines
- o Amending operating guidelines done by ASA Exec + GSC and UA Presidents and Treasurers (vote can be brought to GSC reps or UA senate if needed)
- o Increased accountability of ASA along with increased efficiency
- o Define a process for student groups to appeal ASA decisions to the GSC and UA

In order for this amendment to pass, it must also be passed by the UA Senate as an amendment to the UA Bylaws.



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### GSC Bylaws, Article II, Section C.5 currently reads:

5. *Association of Student Activities*

The Association of Student Activities is a joint committee of the GSC and the Undergraduate Association formed to represent, promote, and allocate resources to student activities.

### GSC Bylaws, Article II, Section C.5 should be amended to read as follows:

5. *Association of Student Activities*

The following shall be valid only if they are fully agreed upon by the MIT Graduate Student Council (GSC) and the MIT Undergraduate Association (UA), and included in the Bylaws of both groups. A majority vote of student group representatives during a General Body Meeting (as defined in Section v. below) shall be sufficient to force a vote of both the GSC and the UA Senate regarding a specific change to the following.

i. Purpose

The Association of Student Activities (ASA) shall be a joint committee of the MIT Graduate Student Council and the MIT Undergraduate Association (UA). Its purpose shall be to communicate the needs and interests of student groups to the GSC and UA, to promote student activities on the MIT campus, to serve the common interests of student activities, and to arbitrate conflicting interests.

ii. Officers of the Executive Board

The ASA shall consist of an Executive Board responsible for overseeing student activities on the MIT campus. This Board shall consist of the following officers: president, treasurer, secretary, two undergraduate members-at-large, two graduate members-at-large, one student member-at-large, a GSC representative, and a UA representative. The ASA president shall have the same rights and responsibilities as chairs of other GSC and UA standing committees, with the exception of election and removal processes. All officers must be registered MIT students and shall serve one-year terms. With the exception of the GSC and UA representatives, all officers shall be elected at an ASA General Body Meeting, to be defined in Section v. below. Quorum for proceeding with elections shall be representatives from  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all recognized student groups. These elections must occur on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. The GSC and UA shall be responsible for the appointment of their representatives to the ASA on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of April.

iii. Functions of the Executive Board

The Executive Board shall recognize and derecognize student groups, maintain and distribute relevant information about all recognized groups, assign space to these groups, and arbitrate inter-activity disputes when requested by these groups to do so. The ASA shall interface with the MIT Student Activities Office as appropriate on all of these matters.

iv. Definition of Operating Guidelines

The ASA shall maintain a set of operating guidelines, to be made publicly available on its website, that explicitly define all relevant policies not included in these Bylaws regarding its roles and responsibilities. Specifically, these guidelines must outline responsibilities of the ASA officers, procedures for the recognition and derecognition of student groups, rights and responsibilities of student groups with respect to the ASA, and guidelines that regulate the allocation and use of common student group resources (such as bulletin boards and office



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space). The ASA operating guidelines may be modified by a 2/3 vote of the entire ASA Executive Board. If either the GSC President and Treasurer or the UA President and Finance Board Chair oppose a given change, their veto must be sustained through the passing of legislation by either the GSC or the UA Senate, respectively. The GSC President and Treasurer, and UA President and Finance Board Chair must be informed of any changes to the ASA operating guidelines as soon as they are made. These changes must be communicated to all recognized student groups 24 to 48 hours after the GSC and UA have been informed, and shall go into effect 14 days after they are made. Changes to the ASA operating guidelines may be overturned by student groups either through a petition signed by the presidents or treasurers of 1/3 of these groups, or by a vote of the representatives of 1/3 of these groups taken at a General Body Meeting.

### *v.* General Body Meetings

The ASA shall hold at least one General Body Meeting (GBM) per year, consisting of representatives from all recognized student groups. Quorum to proceed with a meeting shall be 30 or 20%, whichever is less, of these representatives, and all recognized student groups shall be informed of a GBM at least ten days prior to the meeting. The presidents or treasurers of any 20 recognized student groups may call a GBM through petition to the ASA Executive Board. The GSC and UA Senate may also call a GBM through the passing of legislation.

### *vi.* Oversight Mechanisms

Any member of the ASA Executive Board, with the exception of the GSC and UA representatives, may be removed by a 2/3 vote of those attending a General Body Meeting. Quorum for this meeting shall be the same as quorum for elections. Executive Board members other than the President, Treasurer, GSC representative, and UA representative may also be removed by a 3/4 vote of the Executive Board. Representatives appointed by the GSC and UA may be removed by their respective groups in the appropriate manner (as defined in the Constitutions or Bylaws of the GSC and UA, respectively). The ASA operating guidelines may specify additional mechanisms for officer removal.

### *vii.* Appeals Process

Student groups shall have the ability to appeal decisions made by the ASA at least once per semester. Appeals shall be heard by an Appeals Board consisting of the President and Treasurer of the GSC (or their proxies), the President and Finance Board Chair of the UA (or their proxies), and the President and one graduate and one undergraduate member of the ASA Executive Board. The ASA President shall be responsible for scheduling this appeals process. If an appeals process exists within the ASA Executive Board, student groups must follow that process before appealing to the GSC and UA. In addition, student groups may be requested to submit any relevant information to the Appeals Board, based upon which this Board may accept or reject their appeal without a meeting.



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**For reference, the current ASA Constitution is given below:**

### Constitution of the Association of Student Activities

- I. Name  
The name of this organization shall be the Association of Student Activities (ASA).
- II. Purpose  
The purpose of this organization shall be to promote student activities on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) campus, to serve their common interests, and to arbitrate conflicting interests.
- III. Definitions  
The following definitions apply throughout this constitution except where otherwise noted:
  1. Types of Activities  
An extracurricular activity is any organized, continuing activity which takes place primarily on the MIT campus and is not part of the academic curriculum. A student activity is an extracurricular activity administered and run substantially and primarily by MIT students.
  2. Activity Membership Classifications
    - a. The active membership of an extracurricular activity is that portion of the membership of the activity that regularly participates in the functioning of the activity.
    - b. The core membership of an extracurricular activity is that portion of the active membership most directly responsible for the continuing success of the activity. Usually this comprises the "leadership" or executive committee of the activity and includes the titled positions or the activity's management.
  3. Activity Classifications
    - a. Full recognition groups are student activities with an active membership of at least 5 MIT students and at all times at least 50% MIT students, including standing committees of the MIT student governments. The activity's president and treasurer, or corresponding officers, must be registered MIT students.
    - b. Sponsored recognition groups are student activities with an active membership of at least 5 MIT students and at all times at least 50% MIT students, including ad hoc committees of the MIT student governments. These activities are directly linked to an MIT program, existing student activities, or an academic department. The sponsoring party of such a group is able to provide the basic support necessary to ensure success of the group.
    - c. Club Sports groups are student activities with an active membership of at least 5 MIT students and at all times at least 50% MIT students which have been granted recognition by the Club Sports Council and accepted by the ASA Executive Board.
    - d. FSILG / Dorms are student activities with an active membership of at least 5 MIT students which are members of the Interfraternity Council, Panhel, Dormcom, Living Group Council, or the Graduate Student Council General Council.
- IV. Membership
  1. Eligibility  
Activities meeting the following criteria are eligible for ASA membership:
    - a. Full or sponsored ASA-recognized activities must follow MIT's Non-Discrimination policy. Voting membership may be restricted when clearly germane to the purpose of the activity.
    - b. The majority of the voting membership of full or sponsored ASA-recognized activities must be MIT students.
    - c. Any FSILG/Dorm activity is eligible for recognition as a non-voting member of the ASA. Any full or sponsored activity is eligible for recognition as a voting member of the ASA.
    - d. The activity's president and treasurer, or corresponding officers, must be distinct registered MIT students
  2. Recognition
    - a. Any eligible activity may be granted ASA recognition upon fulfillment of the ASA Recognition Procedures published by the ASA Executive Board. These procedures must contain, but are not limited to:
      1. A statement of purpose for the activity.
      2. A constitution of the activity.
      3. A signed acknowledgment of the Massachusetts Hazing Law.
      4. A list of at least five MIT students who will be members of the group.
    - b. The ASA Recognition Procedures must meet the following criteria:
      1. The ASA Executive Board must publish the recognition procedures in a prominent place.
      2. The procedures may be changed by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Board, but not more than once during each spring/summer term and each fall/IAP term.
      3. The procedures may always be reviewed by the ASA membership at a General Body meeting.
  3. Rights and Responsibilities
    - a. All members of the ASA have the following responsibilities:
      1. Each activity shall notify the ASA Executive Board of changes of officers or contacts, constitutional changes, and other information as requested by the ASA Executive Board at least semi-annually.
      2. Each activity shall comply with all rulings of the ASA and its Executive Board.
    - b. Funding eligibility shall be determined by the ASA Executive Board, the Undergraduate Association Finance Board, or the Graduate Student Council Funding Board.



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- c. Each voting ASA member activity shall have a representative present at all ASA General Body meetings. Failure to attend at least one such meeting per semester may be considered sufficient grounds for derecognition.
  - d. ASA recognized activities derive the following benefits from ASA recognition:
    1. Use of MIT name
    2. Scheduling of MIT rooms and facilities including Talbot House and Endicott House
    3. Other benefits as provided in the policies of the ASA.
  - e. Except in unusual circumstances, only full ASA-recognized activities are eligible for ASA shared and private office space. All other recognized groups should receive office space from their sponsoring party.
4. Derecognition
- a. Any ASA recognized activity not meeting its responsibilities as set forth in this constitution and the policies of the ASA may be subject to derecognition.
  - b. Recognition may be withdrawn from any activity by a two-thirds majority vote of voting ASA members present at a General Body meeting.
  - c. The ASA Executive Board may derecognize any activity not meeting its responsibilities as defined in ARTICLE IV, Section 3 by providing one month written notice via e-mail to the activity's officers mailing list as stored in the ASA Database.
  - d. In addition, the ASA Executive Board, acting in its judicial capacity as mediator between member activities, may restrict, in whole or in part, an activity from any privileges granted by the ASA to its members or derived through ASA membership.

### V. Officers

The officers of the ASA consist of the president, treasurer, secretary, two undergraduate members-at-large, two graduate members-at-large, one student member-at-large, a GSC representative, and a UA representative. These officers make up the voting membership of the ASA Executive Board.

1. Duties
  - a. The president shall preside at all meetings of the ASA and of its Executive Board. The president shall also be the outside representative of the ASA in all matters. The president will call Executive Board and General Body meetings as necessary. In the event of a tie, may cast a vote at Executive Board meetings and General Body meetings.
  - b. The treasurer shall be responsible for the finances of the ASA and of its Executive Board. This officer shall become a voting member of the UA Finance Board and of the GSC Funding Board unless they do not meet qualifications set forth by the respective board. The treasurer shall also be the chair of the Large Event Funds (LEF) funding board and the Assisting Recurring Cultural And Diversity Events (ARCADE) funding board.
  - c. The secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings and handle all correspondence of the ASA and its Executive Board.
  - d. The two undergraduate members-at-large must be registered undergraduates at MIT. If the ASA treasurer is not able to serve on the UA Finance Board, one of these members shall be appointed by the ASA president to serve in the treasurer's place.
  - e. The two graduate members-at-large must be registered graduate students at MIT. One of these members shall be appointed by the ASA president to serve as a voting member of the GSC Funding Board.
  - f. The one student member-at-large must be a registered student at MIT.
  - g. The GSC representative shall be appointed by the Graduate Student Council and responsible to that body.
  - h. The UA representative shall be appointed by the Undergraduate Association Senate and responsible to that body.
2. Vacancies in Offices
  - a. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the president, the vacancy will be filled by the first available officer in the order specified in ARTICLE V, Section 1.
  - b. In the event of a vacancy in any other office, the president shall appoint a temporary replacement, subject to ratification by a majority vote of the Executive Board. The vacancy will be filled at the next General Body meeting as specified in ARTICLE V, Section 4.
3. Removal of Officers
  - a. Voting members of the ASA Executive Board who accumulate three or more unexcused absences for Executive Board meetings will be automatically removed and the vacancy filled as specified in ARTICLE V, Section 2. Absences may be excused as specified in ARTICLE VI, Section 3, Subsection 4.
  - b. Officers may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of voting ASA members present at a General Body meeting.
4. Election of Officers
  - a. The officers of the ASA shall be elected to serve for one year at the first regular General Body meeting of the Spring term, which must occur on or before the 15th of April. The newly elected officers shall take office two weeks following the election. Officers will be elected in the order listed in ARTICLE V, Section 1.
  - b. Quorum for elections shall be one-fourth of the voting membership of the ASA.
  - c. To be eligible for office, the candidate must be an MIT student and a member of an ASA-recognized activity. Nominations may be accepted by electronic or paper submission beginning two weeks before the announced date for the General Body meeting. Nominations may also be accepted from the floor at the meeting itself.
  - d. To be elected to an office, the candidate must carry the majority vote of voting ASA members present. In the event that no candidate has a majority, the candidate with the least votes shall be stricken from the ballot and a new vote taken.

### VI. The Executive Board

1. Definition  
The Executive Board shall be the administrative and judicial body of the ASA.
2. Membership  
The Executive Board shall consist of the officers of the ASA and an ex officio representative from the Student Activities Office.
3. Meetings  
Executive Board meetings shall be conducted at least biweekly during the regular school year, except when conflicting with MIT holidays. The Executive Board must meet at least once between General Body meetings.



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4. Responsibilities  
The Executive Board shall have the following responsibilities:
  - a. Maintain and supervise the distribution of a list of all activities recognized by the ASA.
  - b. Review and, in conjunction with the Dean's office, assign space allocation to recognized activities.
  - c. Have the authority to arbitrate all inter-activity disputes at the request of a member activity.
  - d. Be responsible for the interpretation of this constitution and the enactment of policies of the ASA, subject to review by the General Body.
5. Judicial Process  
The ASA Executive Board shall be the judicial body of the ASA and shall function under the following procedure:
  - a. No ruling of the ASA or its Executive Board shall restrict any purely internal functioning of an activity.
  - b. The ASA Executive Board may only rule when an activity has violated a published procedure/policy of the ASA, its Executive Board, the UA, the GSC, or the MIT administration. All rulings must cite the specific procedures or policies violated.
  - c. All procedures/policies created by the ASA Executive Board must clearly indicate the maximum set of possible sanctions.
  - d. Rulings may be made when the ASA Executive Board convenes itself with a majority of the Board voting in favor, or in exceptional circumstances, via email with a 2/3 vote of the Board.
  - e. All rulings must be communicated via email or letter within twenty-four hours.
6. Appeals
  - a. Rulings of the ASA Executive Board may be appealed to the Board within two weeks of the initial ruling.
  - b. A hearing between the officers of the affected activity and the ASA Executive Board shall be scheduled no later than one month after the appeal request.
  - c. Following the hearing, the ASA Executive Board shall meet in executive session to decide an appeal. The original ruling shall stand unless decided otherwise by a 2/3 vote of the Board.
  - d. Sanctions for the violations in question may not be increased due to an appeal.
  - e. Further Appeals
    1. Rulings by the ASA Executive Board may be appealed at a meeting of the General Body of the ASA. Decisions shall be by a majority vote of the General Body.
    2. Further appeals can be made to the joint UA-GSC Judicial Board.

### VII. General Body Meetings

1. Regular Meetings
  - a. There shall be no more than three regular General Body meetings per term.
  - b. Electronic or paper mail shall be sent to the last given contact address of all ASA member activities at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.
  - c. The quorum for regular business at a General Body meeting shall be thirty voting ASA member activities, or twenty percent of the ASA voting membership, whichever is less.
  - d. All such meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (Revised), except as specified herein.
  - e. All voting ASA recognized activities shall have one vote each in meetings of the ASA.
  - f. Each voting ASA member activity shall be represented by its president or designated representative. No voting individual at a General Body meeting may exercise more than one vote.
  - g. The ASA General Body may, by a majority vote of the voting members present, adopt standing policies consistent with this Constitution that shall be binding on its Executive Board and shall continue in effect until amended or repealed by the General Body. The text of proposed policies or changes to policies must be distributed to member groups prior to the General Body meeting at which they will be discussed.
2. Special Meetings
  - a. In extraordinary circumstances, the ASA president may call a special meeting of the ASA General Body. A petition signed by 1/3 of the voting ASA member activities may also call a special meeting. A special meeting shall differ from a regular meeting only in that:
    1. Notice for special meetings must be given only two days in advance.
    2. The agenda for the meeting shall be posted the day of the meeting.
    3. Under no circumstances shall elections or amendments to this constitution be in order at a special meeting.
  - b. The quorum for special business shall be one-third of the ASA voting membership.

### VIII. Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a General Body meeting. The text of any constitutional amendment must be distributed with the agenda for each meeting at which the amendment is to be considered. The amendment must then be approved by a majority vote of the Undergraduate Association Senate and the Graduate Student Council General Body.

### IX. Ratification

1. This constitution shall supersede all previous constitutions of the ASA and the GSC Activities Recognition Board.
2. This constitution shall be ratified upon acceptance by two thirds of the members present and voting at an ASA General Assembly meeting, if the affirmative vote includes at least twenty members of the ASA, and by a two thirds vote of the full Graduate Student Council.
3. Upon ratification, this constitution shall go into effect Spring 1989, at the next set of elections.