

CONSTITUTION OF THE CANTERBURY SCHOOLS' DEBATING COUNCIL

Part One – the Council and the Executive

1) Purpose

- a) The primary purpose of the Canterbury Schools' Debating Council (*the Council*) is to provide debating opportunities for and to facilitate the development of debating skills of secondary school students in Canterbury.
- b) The secondary purposes of the Council are:
 - i) Providing annual competitions for secondary school students at various appropriate levels.
 - ii) Providing resources to, and working with, schools to facilitate the development of student debaters.
 - iii) Co-operating with the New Zealand Schools' Debating Council to assist with the organisation of Regional Championships and the coaching of representative teams in Canterbury.

2) Executive Membership

- a) The *Executive* of the Council shall be the Council's governing body and is responsible for its management and administration.
- b) The Executive may conduct Executive meetings and may determine its own meeting procedures for these meetings.
- c) The Executive shall consist of:
 - i) A *Captain*, who shall oversee all activities of the Council, act as the chief liaison between the Council and schools, preside at Council meetings, and act as the Council's spokesperson; and
 - ii) A *First Mate*, who shall assist the President in his or her role; and
 - iii) A *Treasure Map*, who shall collect and account for all subscriptions and other monies received by the Council, disposing of them according to Council decisions; keep proper books; and furnish a Financial Report, including a Statement and Expenditure for the year, and a Statement of the Council's Assets and Liabilities, to the Annual General Meeting; and

- iv) Two *Pieces o' Eight*, who shall be assigned duties as required for the furtherance of the Council's business; and
 - v) The *Convenor* of the Canterbury Regional Championships, who, if not elected to another position, shall hold an *ex-officio* position on the Council for the duration of his or her appointment. The Convenor shall hold speaking rights at Council meetings, but may not cast votes. He or she shall have the sole discretion over matters delegated to him or her by the New Zealand Schools' Debating Council, including the organisation of the Regional Championships and the selection and coaching of representative teams; however he or she shall be advised and assisted by the Council in these matters.
- d) With the exception of the Convenor, no individual who already holds a position on the Executive will be eligible for election to another position.
- e) All Executive members apart from the Convenor shall be elected at General Meetings, and shall hold office for no more than one calendar year from the General Meeting at which they were elected. The Convenor shall be appointed by the New Zealand Schools' Debating Council and shall hold office at that organisation's discretion.
- f) An Executive member may only be removed from office during his or her period of tenure for cause and by a unanimous resolution of the other members of the Executive. If an office holder is removed in this way then a Special General Meeting must be called as soon as practicable in order to elect a replacement.
- g) An Executive member may resign by delivering notice in writing to the Captain; or if the Captain wishes to resign he or she may do so by delivering notice in writing to the First Mate. If an Executive member resigns:
- i) The remaining members of the Executive may appoint a non-voting member to carry out the duties of the resigned member until the next General Meeting.
 - ii) If the Captain resigns then the First Mate will act as Captain until the next General Meeting of the Society. The First Mate's first action as Captain must be to send an email from the presidential Gmail account titled "I am the Captain now."
 - iii) If the resignation results in there being fewer than four voting members on the Executive, then a Special General Meeting must be called as soon as is practicable to elect replacements to the vacant positions.

3) Executive Powers

The Executive shall have the power to do anything necessary for the accomplishment of the purposes set out in Section 1, so long as it acts in accordance with this Constitution.

4) Executive Terms and Handover

The term of each new Executive will begin twenty days after the Annual General Meeting, at which date the incumbent Executive's term will cease.

5) Executive Meetings

- a) Executive meetings shall be notified in advance to each Executive member electronically unless the member has requested otherwise. No binding decisions shall be made except after all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that all members are able to attend.
- b) Quorum for meetings shall be four voting Executive members (as specified in Section 2), including either the Captain or the First mate. Decisions may be made through electronic communication; however this shall require all voting Executive members to respond to the motion.
- c) All Executive decisions shall be made by a simple majority of the voting members. If done in person votes shall be by voice; and if done via communication in an open poll that is visible to all voting members.

6) Council Finances

- a) The funds and resources of the Council, from whatever source they are derived, shall only be applied to the promotion of the objects of the Council (as set out in Section 1). No funds may be utilised without the authorisation of the Council.
- b) All monies shall be received by the Treasurer, who shall deposit them in the Council's bank account.
- c) The financial year of the Council shall commence on December the 1st of each year, and terminate on November the 30th of the following calendar year. Financial expenses of significant nature after the Annual General Meeting but prior to the beginning of the new Council's financial year must be disclosed and agreed to on a basis of consensus, by the incoming Council.

Part Two – General Meetings

7) Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings

- a) Annual General Meetings shall be held each year on a date to be specified by the Executive, but that is to be no earlier than the First of September, and no later than the Thirtieth of November.
- b) Special General Meetings may be called from time to time by the Executive by giving notice as set out in Section 10).

8) Attendance, Speaking, and Voting Rights

- a) At any General Meeting, voting rights shall be confined to *eligible electors*, who meet at least one of the following criteria – namely , that they must:

- i) Have held an elected position on the Executive within the twenty-four months prior to the General Meeting; or
 - ii) Have adjudicated (including as a trainee adjudicator) on behalf of the Council at a secondary school debating tournament (organised by the Council or not) in Canterbury within the twelve months prior to the General Meeting; or
 - iii) Have coached a secondary school team in a Council organised or facilitated tournament within the twelve months prior to the General Meeting ; or
 - iv) Have debated as a secondary school student at a tournament in Canterbury within the twelve months prior to the General Meeting; or
 - v) Be a life member of the Council as specified in Section 9.
- b) Members of the public may attend General Meetings, but shall not have speaking rights granted to them without the assent of either the Chair or the majority of the eligible electors present.

9) Life Members

- a) *Life Members* of the Council are those individuals set out in Subsection (b) of this Section who have been recognised for their exceptional contribution to secondary schools' debating in Canterbury. Unless duly elected, they shall hold no position on the Executive and they may not act for or carry out any duties on behalf of the Council in their capacity as Life Members.
- b) The Life Members of the Council are Jeremy Johnson, Rose Austen, Hayden Ryan and Erin Jackson.
- c) Life Members may be elected at General Meetings by a secret ballot. They require the same threshold of votes for election as the passage of amendments to this Constitution (as specified in Section 13). Nominations for Life Members must include a description of why the individual meets the criteria in Subsection (a).

10) Notice and Procedural Requirements

- a) Notice of General Meetings must be given by the Executive at least three weeks prior to the date of the General Meeting. All reasonable steps must be taken to give notice to all eligible electors of the General Meeting and of who is eligible to participate, including by posting on the website and notifying all registered schools.
- b) Notice must include the contact details for the *Returning Officer*, who shall be appointed by the Executive to oversee the voting procedures at the General Meeting. The Returning Officer is ineligible for election to the Executive at the General Meeting for which he or she is appointed, and may not put forward any amendments to this Constitution to be voted on at that General Meeting.

- c) Nominations for the election of persons to the Executive and of proposed amendments to this Constitution must be communicated to the Returning Officer no fewer than ten days prior to the General Meeting.
- d) At a date at least one week prior to the General Meeting, the Returning Officer will make available proxy voting forms, which may be used by eligible electors who are unable to attend the General Meeting. These forms must:
 - i) Set out all nominations that meet the requirements of Subsection (c), including a brief description of the candidate (which shall be provided by the nominee); and
 - ii) Set out all proposed amendments to this Constitution that meet the requirements of Subsection (c), as well as a brief rationale provided by their sponsor; and
 - iii) Require the person filling out the form to demonstrate why they are an eligible elector.
- e) Only proxy votes by eligible electors that are received by the Returning Officer (prior to the General Meeting) on the form described in Subsection (d) shall be valid. The Returning Officer shall have sole discretion to determine the validity of proxy votes according to the criteria set out in this Constitution.
- f) The incumbent President of the Executive shall chair General Meetings at all times except during the elections of new Executive members and votes on Constitutional amendments, at which time the Returning Officer shall chair the meeting.

Part Three – Miscellaneous Provisions

11) Interpretation

This Constitution will be interpreted at first instance by the Executive, and ought to be interpreted so as to confer validity rather than invalidity to actions.

12) Dissolution

In the event that a resolution is passed at a General Meeting to wind up the Council, its assets shall pass to the University of Canterbury Debating Society in order that it may use them to further the purposes set out in Section 1.

13) Constitutional Amendments

- a) Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by eligible electors at any General Meeting, following the criteria adopted above.
- b) Amendments shall only be adopted if they receive the support of two-thirds of voting eligible electors at a General Meeting.

- c) Subsection (b) notwithstanding, at the first General Meeting after this Constitution has come into force, Constitutional amendments shall only require the support of a majority of voting eligible electors to be adopted.

14) Coming into Force

This Constitution came into force immediately following its adoption at the Annual General Meeting of the Fourteenth of November 2013, and remains in force (as amended) from that date.