

# The College Democrats of America at the University of Tennessee Constitution

## Preamble

In order to promote a better America, with equality, opportunity, and freedom within a just and strong society, we dedicate ourselves to organizing the participation of Democratic college students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In this mission, we call for full participation of all UT students, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, physical handicap, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation. Understanding the importance of participation in the Democratic Party to the preservation of our values and principles, we, Democratic college students, do hereby associate ourselves and adopt this Constitution as the College Democrats of America at the University of Tennessee.

## Article I: Name and Purpose

### A: Name:

The name of this organization shall be the College Democrats of America at the University of Tennessee, hereafter referred to in this document as the “UTK College Democrats.”

### B: Purpose:

The UTK College Democrats pledges itself to support the philosophy and candidates of the Democratic Party. Furthermore, the UTK College Democrats declares its intention to support all efforts to increase the participation of college students in Democratic affairs. To these ends, the College Democrats shall educate and train its members so that they may be better able to:

1. Educate students about the philosophy of the Democratic Party;
2. Assist in the election of local, state, and national Democratic candidates.
3. Affect political change on the local, state, and national level.

## Article 2: Membership

### A: Members:

Membership in the College Democrats shall be open to any undergraduate or graduate student currently enrolled in The University of Tennessee who wishes to be known as a College Democrat and who has the best interests of the College Democrats and the Democratic Party at heart, regardless of gender, race,

ethnicity, national origin, religion, physical handicap, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation.

B: Semester dues shall be decided on at the first Executive meeting of the semester based on Treasurer's recommendation and then voted on immediately during the next General Body meeting.

### Article 3: The Executive Board

#### A: Composition:

The Executive Board shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Campaign Liaison. These five (5) spots shall be referred to collectively as the "Core Executive Board." If a qualifying member, subject to Article 2, expresses interest, the positions of Communications Director, Membership Director, and Events Coordinator (hereby referred to as the "Extended Executive Board") shall be added to the Executive Board and bestowed with all rights and privileges of the Core Executive Board.

B: The President may choose to appoint Senior Advisors from former officers of past Executive Boards who no longer have the time to commit to a full Executive Board member role. These appointments are subject to approval by a majority of the Executive Board and be given all the rights and privileges of the Executive Board.

C: At the beginning of each academic year, the Executive Board will hold a special election for Freshman Representative to the Executive Board. Members interested in seeking this role must be a freshman at UT and qualify for membership. The role will follow the same election guidelines as the Executive Board elections with the caveat that the student must announce their intention to run at the second (2) meeting of the year and the vote will follow on the third (3) meeting of the year.

D: The Executive Board shall determine the agenda and policy of the College Democrats and coordinate all activities and events.

E: Executive Board shall vote on the initial proposed semester budget by the Treasurer no later than the third (3) Executive Meeting of the given semester.

1. If the proposed budget fails to pass by a simple majority, the Executive Board is to recommend changes to the budget. The revised budget shall then be voted on the following Executive Board meeting.

F: Executive Board meetings shall be open to the general assembly attendance, but only Executive Board members will be eligible to participate and vote on initiatives and issues presented to the Board. A brief question and answer/suggestion session may follow Executive Board meetings to allow general assembly to address questions or concerns.

#### Article 4: Duties of the Executive Board Positions

A: All Executive Board members must maintain active involvement in all of the UTK College Democrats activities and endeavors.

B: Duties of the President.

The President shall:

1. Be the Chief Executive Officer of the UTK College Democrats;
2. Establish and define the agenda for all meetings with recommendations from Executive Board;
3. Act as the official representative of the UTK College Democrats to all campus groups, media, and state and local groups (including, but not limited to, the Knox County Democratic Party, Tennessee Democratic Party, Tennessee Federation of College Democrats, and the College Democrats of America) or to delegate this responsibility out when necessary;
4. Preside over all meetings (general and executive);
5. Carry out Mandates, Policies, and Directives issued by the Executive Board.

C: Duties of the Vice President.

The Vice President shall:

1. Assume the role of President in the event the current President is unable for any reason;
2. Arrange meeting times;
3. Serve as Sergeant-at-Arms (maintains order) for all meetings;
4. Serve as Chairman of Issues Caucuses.

D: Duties of the Secretary.

The Secretary shall:

1. Record meeting minutes and publish them in a timely manner;
2. Maintain correspondence with members through the organization's email;
3. Maintain website and online events calendar.

E: Duties of the Treasurer.

The Treasurer Shall:

1. Create the organization's Semester budget;
2. Manage bank account;
3. Approve or deny all claims for reimbursement;

4. Maintain accurate financial documentation.
5. Serve as chairman of the Fundraising Committee;
6. Appoint members to the Fundraising Committee;
7. Organize and oversee all fundraising efforts;
8. Maintain list of UTK College Democrat alumni.

F: Duties of the Campaign Liaison.

The Campaign Liaison shall:

1. Attend or find a substitute to attend all state and local Democratic party functions;
2. Ensure meetings have speakers.

G: Duties of the Communications Director.

The Communications Director shall:

1. Alert campus and local media to UTK College Democrats sponsored events;
2. Update group blog.

I: Duties of the Membership Director.

The Membership Director shall:

1. Serve as primary contact for all new and prospective members;
2. Coordinate UTK College Democrats' presence at UT campus's yearly Involvement Fair;
3. Validate eligibility of all members who desire an elected position on the Executive Board.

J: Duties of the Events Chair.

The Events Chair shall:

1. Coordinate all events sanctioned by UTK College Democrats Executive Board;
2. Serve as Chief Promoter of all events hosted or co-hosted by the UTK College Democrats (including meetings).

Article 5: Elections

A: Elections shall occur once a year and the declaration of an election must be made public two (2) weeks prior to the day of elections.

B: Members are eligible to vote as long as they are listed on the year's official role (email list) and have paid at minimum 1 semester's dues for that Academic year. This eligibility shall be determined by the Membership Director in coordination with the Treasurer. If the decision of the Membership Director is challenged, the Membership Director's finding will be put to a vote by the Executive Board. The decision by the majority of the Executive Board is final.

C: Secretive ballots:

One vote per person per election. Candidates cannot vote in their own election.

D: Procedure:

Candidates are nominated directly before their election. 1. Speech length: Pres - 4min; VP - 3min; Other - 2min 2. Q & A: Pres - 7min; Other - 5min 3. Supporting speakers: Pres - 5; Other - 3. Each supporting speaker has 45 seconds to support his candidate. Order of speakers will alternate among candidates. They are forbidden to make any derogatory statements about any candidate. Candidates are prohibited from the election room during the time of supporting statements. 4. Vote counting and declaration of winner will occur directly after that election.

E: Positions:

The positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Campaign Liaison must be filled to constitute a full Executive Board. Events Coordinator, Membership Director, and Communications Director are optional positions and their inclusion in the Executive Board is only mandatory when a qualifying member desires to run for one of the positions.

F: Office restrictions:

1. No one may occupy multiple positions in the Core Executive Board; however, members may hold multiple titles from the list of Extended Executive Board positions. Regardless of the number of titles held, a single person may only have one (1) vote on the Executive Board;
2. Must have a minimum of one (1) semester of involvement with College Democrats and paid one (1) semester of dues.

G: Term limits:

No one may hold the same Core Executive Board title for more than 3 years.

## Article 6: Committees and Caucuses

A: The Executive Board may approve as many committees as they deem necessary.

B: Upon the first meeting of the year, the general assembly will be given the opportunity to create as many Issue-specific caucuses as they desire. The Caucuses will become official at the second meeting of the year and the Vice President will serve as the Chairman of each Issue Caucus.

C: Caucus Chairs Responsibilities:

Caucus chairs shall issue monthly reports to the Executive Board as well as the general assembly. They are also able to attend and participate in executive meetings but do not have voting power on the Executive Board. If they also have an Executive title, they remain to have voting rights.

## Article 7: Meetings

A: General Meetings:

The UTK College Democrats must hold three (3) meetings per semester (6 every year). The meetings must be declared publicly (ie. Facebook) five (5) days before the official meeting time, whenever possible. It is advised to hold meetings every week but not mandatory.

B: Participation:

Any and all eligible members are encouraged to participate in general meetings. If any existing member desires to have an issue discussed in the meeting, the member may request to be recognized in the meeting or they may post the agenda item in a public forum (ie. Facebook) forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting and it shall be added to the agenda. If the item is missing from the agenda, it shall become the first agenda item to be discussed in the next meeting.

C: Executive Board Meetings:

The Executive Board may meet as often as they choose. Meeting times and places must be agreed upon by a quorum of the Executive Board (two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Executive Board or five (5) members, whichever is less). Executive Board meetings need not be declared publicly nor are their minutes required to be published; however, if a eligible member requests to observe an Executive Board meeting, they may attend and observe the meeting, but they are not permitted to participate unless recognized by the President.

D: Executive Board Participation:

Decisions made by the Executive Board need not be voted on to be approved unless an Executive Board member requests a vote. In the event of a request, a simple majority of the present Executive Board members will suffice to pass or reject a discussion item.

#### Article 8: Removal

##### A: Cause for removal:

Cause for removal shall be defined as malfeasance or nonfeasance of duties assigned by the Executive Board or delineated within this document, or as ineligibility for Executive Board membership pursuant to Article 2. Cause for removal shall also include grounds found by three-fourths (3/4) members of the Executive Board to constitute good and sufficient cause.

##### B: Process for removal:

A: To begin the process for removal, another member of the Executive Board must charge the officer with the reasons for his or her removal publicly at a meeting of the Executive Board. The officer in question must be offered an opportunity to defend himself or herself at that meeting. In the event the charged officer is not in attendance, every attempt (ie. Email, phone, and/or Facebook) shall be made to ensure the charged officer is made aware of the charges and given the opportunity to defend himself or herself. After a period of two weeks the issue shall be put to a vote. Three-fourths (3/4) members of the present Executive Board must vote for removal for an officer to be removed;

B: After the initial vote of approval of dismissal, a total of one (1) week must pass before a second vote for confirmation;

C: Executive Members will be evaluated at the end of each semester for attendance. If a member's attendance falls below making fifty (50) percent of general meetings and Executive meetings they shall be automatically put to a vote for dismissal.

#### Article 9: Vacancies

##### A: Declaration of vacancy:

1. A vacancy shall be declared when a member of the Executive Board dies, resigns, or is removed from office. If the vacancy occurs in an Executive Board position other than the President or Vice President, the President shall appoint a successor with majority consent of the remaining Executive Board. If the vacancy is the President, then the Vice-President shall automatically be

the replacement. If the vacancy is the Vice-President, then the Secretary shall automatically be the replacement. In the event that both the President and Vice President positions are vacant at the same time, the Secretary will assume the Presidency and the Campaign Liaison will assume the Vice Presidency. For multiple vacancies, the line of succession will follow the order of Executive Board positions listed in this document until the President and Vice President Positions are filled, discounting the Treasurer position which shall remain steady year round;

2. Treasurer shall remain stagnant unless the case of three (3) or more vacancies arise in which case the Treasurer shall act as interim president until special Elections are concluded.
3. In the event of multiple vacant positions (three (3) or more), special elections will be held at the following General Assembly meeting following the format of normal elections with nominations occurring from the floor. Elections shall be tabled for one (1) week after nomination process.

## Article 10: Amendments

### A: Procedure:

The Constitution can only be amended at the beginning of each academic year. At the second meeting of the year, the President will declare an Amendment Committee which will be made up of two (2) Executive Board members and one (1) general body member that will be appointed by the President and confirmed by a majority of the Executive Board. They will be given two (2) weeks to suggest amendments to the Constitution. The Amendment Committee must pass all potential amendments unanimously. The proposed amendments will then be presented to the Executive Board and must pass a two-thirds (2/3) majority Executive Board vote. The proposed amendments will then be presented at the next meeting to the general body where the proposed amendments must pass by a majority of the general body. Upon the completion of this process, the amendments will be adopted and become enforceable immediately.