

The Constitution of the South China University of Technology International Student Union 2013

Preamble

Intent

1. International students enrolled at the South China University of Technology (the university) wishing
 - to enhance their participation as students and university community members, and
 - to secure the benefits from this for themselves as students and alumni, for their fellow students from China, and for the university and its staff, and,with the support and approval of the university, have formed an association bound by the rules set out in this constitution.

Name

2. The name of that association is the **South China University of Technology International Student Union (ISU)**.

Authority

3. The union's constitution derives its authority from, and is subservient to, the ordinances of the university and those relevant regulations of the government agencies of the Province of Guangdong and of the Peoples Republic of China.

Mission & Aims

1. The union is the representative body for all international students at the university.
2. The mission of the union is to support and provide advice to all international students at the university and to the university. It does this in ways that enhance the educational, social and cultural experience of its members, and encourage an environment of peace and friendship within the membership, and in members' interactions with all university students and staff at the university, and with the broader community.
3. The union's aims are:

- a. to fairly represent members interests to the university and act as a communication bridge between the members and the university.
- b. to develop and deliver social,cultural,sporting and community engagement activities, that enhance the experience and learning of its members.
- c. to build a community of members that contribute to enriching the experience of other students and staff at the university through their engagement with international students.
- d. to ensure that the governance of the union, and the implementation of its activities, do not discriminate against any person, on their grounds of their race, religion, nationality, age, gender, or disability.

Membership

4. All international students enrolled at the university are deemed to be members of the union. A students whois suspended or otherwise excluded by the university, is also excluded from membership of the union.
5. An international student can withdraw voluntarily from membership of the union by formally notifying the union General Secretary, and the university, of their intention to opt out of the rights and obligations of membership of the union. Such students are ineligible to vote at union elections, seek election to union office or receive benefits or funding from the union.

Membership rights and obligations

6. All enrolled international students deemed to be members of the union have the right to participate in all union elections, and to seek to hold office as union Executive Committee Members.
7. Members have an obligation to uphold the principles and regulations of the union, set out in this document, and any other rules validly made under the authority of this constitution, and the regulations and rules of the university.
8. Membershave the right to express opinions and make suggestions about the operation of the union and to lodge formal complaints with the union’sGeneral Secretary about the unions operations and/or office holders.

Governance

Appointments

9. Members of the union shall elect from within the union membership
 - a. A President,and
 - b. 12 other representativeswho, with the President, constitute the Executive Committee of the union.
10. The President is the Chair of the Executive Committee.
11. The Executive Committee will appoint, from within the Executive Committee, the following executive office holders:

- a. a Vice President
- b. a General Secretary
- c. a Treasurer

12. The President and Executive Committee members are appointed for the period of one year. At the end of that year all the positions of President and Executive Committee will become vacant.

Elections

13. The Executive Committee, in consultation with university authorities, will
- a. make, and amend from time to time, rules for the fair conduct of elections as shown in Appendix 2 to this Constitution.
 - b. appoint a Chief Electoral Officer and three Electoral Committee Members, each of whom is a union member but is not a member of the Executive Committee, to plan and supervise elections as set out in Appendix 2 to this Constitution.

Roles and Responsibilities of Office Holders

14. The roles and responsibilities of persons appointed to executive positions are set out in Appendix 1 to this constitution.
15. Executive Committee members and persons appointed to executive positions will execute their responsibilities upholding the principles of:
- a. Addressing issues and activities in the spirit of cooperation, consensus and teamwork
 - b. Respecting and abiding by the rules of the union and the University
 - c. Acting in the best interest of the welfare of union members
 - d. Respecting the income, assets and resources of the union and not using them for personal, or factional, gain of benefit.

Resignation and Removal from Office

16. Executive Committee Members and Executive Office holders may withdraw from office voluntarily, by providing the General-Secretary with notice of intention to resign, and be formally terminated at the next scheduled or at a special meeting of the Executive Committee, whereupon a replacement or replacements will be elected or appointed by the Executive Committee and nominated to the university.
17. Executive Committee Members and Executive Office holders may be removed from office by an Executive Committee member advising the General Secretary of an intention to move a “no-confidence motion” against the named Executive Committee members and/or Executive Officer. This motion must specify the reasons for the motion.
18. The motion of “no-confidence” in the named person is lodged at a meeting of the Executive Committee. If passed by a majority of Executive Committee members, the General Secretary or General Secretary-designate will advise the university of this decision and seek ratification of the removal of the named person from office. Such persons will be barred for at least one semester from taking an executive position within the union.

Administrative Departments and Committees

19. The Executive Committee will appoint Executive Committee members, and/or ordinary members, to lead departments to manage different aspects of union business. These departments include, but are not restricted to:
 - a. The Treasury and General Administration Department
 - b. The Welfare and Academic Department
 - c. The Public Relations Department
 - d. The Entertainment Department
 - e. The Sports Department
20. The Executive Committee may, from time to time, create ad hoc Committees and/or Departments to deal with special issues of concern to the union or to manage special projects or events.

Executive Committee Meetings

21. The Executive Committee will
 - a. Meet no less than once per month.
 - b. Hear and consider reports from the leader of each Department on issues, proposals for new action and progress with agreed action.
 - c. Hold an annual general meeting to:
 - i. Report to the membership on the union's activities and financial accounts for the past year
 - ii. Report on the strategies and activities planned for the next period
 - iii. Hear members' views on any of the above.
22. The General Secretary is responsible for the preparation for, and conduct of, and recording of the decisions of each meeting of the Executive Committee.

Affiliated Clubs/Associations

23. The Executive Committee, in consultation with university officers, may create rules the rules for, and admit other student clubs/associations to affiliate with the union as a pre-condition for receiving union support and/or funding. Such clubs/associations must demonstrate a willingness and capability to abide by the principles of this constitution.

Budget, Assets and Funds Management

24. The Executive Committee will appoint a person as the union's Treasurer whose roles and responsibilities are set out in Appendix 1 to this constitution.

Member Complaints

25. The General Secretary must
 - a. Inform members of the process for lodging complaints about union activities, and
 - b. report these member complaints to the appropriate committee or department for action, and report to the Executive Committee on progress in resolving each of the complaints received.

Amendments

- 26. Amendments to this constitution can be proposed by any member in writing to the General Secretary. The Executive Committee will consider the amendment and determine, including after appropriate consultations with the university, whether it constitutes a
 - a. technical amendment or
 - b. a matter of principle requiring consideration and decision by a union-wide vote.

- 27. Amendments deemed technical amendments require the formal support of two thirds of the Executive Committee.

- 28. Technical amendments that fail to gain support of two thirds of the Executive Committee and amendments in category b. above, shall be presented for a plebiscite of all union members.

- 29. This plebiscite process will be managed by the union’s Chief Electoral Officer.

- 30. Any proposed amendments to this constitution will be presented for consideration to the university and for ratification.

Closure

This constitution was approved by

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acting with the authority of the President and Governing Council of the South China University of Technology,

in the City of Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, Peoples Republic of China

on..... 2013.

Appendix 1

The Executive Committee:

Roles and Responsibilities

1. **The President** is responsible for;
 - a. Providing leadership for the overall performance and growth of the union and its initiatives.
 - b. The union's good standing with members and within the university by ensuring transparency and accountability for the union's activities
 - c. Acting as the union spokesperson for discussions and negotiations with the university and relevant external bodies.
 - d. Effectively chairing and providing guidance to the deliberations of the Executive Committee, ensuring timely implementation of its decisions, and the efficient operation of its Departments.

2. **The Vice President** is responsible for;
 - a. Ensuring effective internal communication between the Executive Committee, its Executive Officers and Department Heads and the broader union membership
 - b. Assisting the President in the promotion, development and effective operation of the union.
 - c. Deputising, when appropriate, for the President.

3. **The General Secretary** is responsible for the preparation and conduct of, each meeting of the Executive Committee. This includes;
 - a. Scheduling regular meetings, and providing at least seven days notice of special meetings, of the Executive Committee.
 - b. Preparation and distribution of the draft meeting agenda at least three days in advance of the respective meeting.
 - c. Coordinating the distribution of reports and proposals at least three days in advance of the meeting at which they are to be considered.
 - d. Ensuring that Executive Committee members are invited in advance or at the meeting to declare a 'conflict- of-interest' on specific agenda items.
 - e. Preparing a record (minutes) of decisions taken at each meeting and submitting these for endorsement by the Executive Committee at its subsequent meeting.

3. **The Treasurer**, in consultation with relevant university officers, will
 - a. prepare an annual budget for the union having regard to opportunities for income and likely costs in conducting the union's various activities,
 - b. operate a union bank account and cash disbursements according to the rules of the university and the principles established under paragraph 15.d of the constitution,
 - c. prepare an annual financial report to the union's annual general meeting that reports, amongst other things, on the financial receipts and outlays against

each activity, the acquisition of new assets and condition of current assets and cash balances.

- d. plan and manage authorized fund raising activities
- e. ensure the safe collection, storage and disbursement of funds for authorized activities and events,
- f. ensure that the handling of union funds and other assets complies with the relevant financial regulations of the university,
- g. present an annual statement of the union accounts at the union's Annual General Meeting, and
- h. provide general administrative support for the operations of the union.

5. Executive Committee Members are responsible for

- a. liaising with union members about issues and activities and providing consequent considered advice to the Executive Committee, Executive Officers, and Department Heads
- b. considering and determining in-Committee
 - (i) appointments to the positions of Vice President, General Secretary and Treasurer and Heads of administrative departments
 - (ii) an annual calendar of activities to achieve the objectives of the union , and
 - (iii) revisions to the administrative structure and procedures needed to support the achievement of union objectives
- c. considering policy issues and administrative procedure matters raised by university officers, union members, Department heads, Executive,
- d. considering reports from relevant Executive Committee and Departmental Heads about planning for activities, their implementation and their evaluation
- e. supporting and assisting the President and other Executive Officers and Department heads at relevant meetings and providing leadership in the implementation of agreed activities
- f. taking on special tasks/duties as requested by the Executive Committee/President,

The Administrative Departments: Structure [as at 1 July 2013]

6. The Executive Committee will establish the following departments, and appoint leaders to each to undertake the functions set out below. Department leaders may coopt members to assist them.



6.1 Welfare and Academic Department

The Executive Committee will appoint a member of the Executive Committee or another suitable union member to lead the Welfare and Academic Department. This Department will establish processes on behalf of the members to

- a) identify issues relating to
 - the effective arrival, reception and orientation of new international students and support provided for their adaptation to the new living and study environment
 - the quality and effectiveness of accommodation and other support services provided to students
 - the delivery of academic classes and the administration of student academic progress
 - member interactions with Chinese students at the university and the broader Chinese community
- b) identify and implement cooperative action by the union to
 - support and guide the university in addressing these issues
 - create an atmosphere of learning where self study and positive class attendance is encouraged.
 - work closely with the university, or any other appropriate legislative or regulatory bodies, regarding student welfare and social engagement.

6.2 Public Relations Department

The Executive Committee will appoint a member of the Executive Committee or another suitable union member to lead a Public Relations Department. This department carries primary responsibility for developing effective means of communication with union members and its other stakeholders to promote all union activities. This includes, but is not restricted to:

- a) the development and maintenance of a union web page under the auspices of the School of International Education and linked to that School's website
- b) design of and production of union publications, publicity and promotion material
- c) the publicity for and promotion of union events, and
- d) with the guidance of university officers, liaison with local media covering the activities of the union.

6.3 Entertainment and Cultural Activities Department

The Executive Committee will appoint a member of the Executive Committee or another suitable union member to lead an Entertainment and Cultural Activities department. This department carries primary responsibility for organizing and promoting active member participation in cultural, musical, and educational programs or events. It will work closely with the Public Relations Department to promote and advertise all activities. This includes, but is not restricted to:

- (a) representing the views and interests of students on cultural matters to the university,
- (b) liaising with university officers in the development of an annual cultural activities calendar and the implementation of events on that calendar,
- (c) liaising with clubs and associations of Chinese students at the university to foster joint social and cultural activities,

6.4 Sport Department

The Executive Committee will appoint a member of the Executive Committee or another suitable union member to lead a Sport department. This department is responsible to

- a) represent the views and interests of students on sporting matters to the university
- b) develop and submit an annual sports plan to the Executive Committee
- (d) assist in planning and managing approved sports competitions and award ceremonies for sports groups liaising with clubs and associations of Chinese students at the university to foster joint social and cultural activities
- c) encourage members to become involved and participate in sports activities
- d) foster sporting activities with Chinese students on the university campus and intervarsity sports activities with Chinese and international students at other universities.

6.5 Treasury and General Administration Department

The person appointed by the Executive Committee to be the Treasurer will lead Treasury General Administration Department. The Treasurer may coopt members to support the operation of this department. This department will be responsible for the union's financial affairs and administrative operations. It oversees and accurately records the collection, disbursement, and accounting of the revenues and expenditures of union. It ensures that the union has access to materials and facilities to effectively achieve its objectives. It works closely with the university to ensure that the union's operations and activities comply with the regulations of the university.

Electoral Committee and Electoral Regulations**Appendix 2**

1. Unless otherwise amended by the Executive Committee and approved by the university, this appendix to the Constitution sets out the regulations and processes for
 - a. the appointment of an Electoral Committee and Chief Electoral Officer, and
 - b. the conduct of elections for the positions of President and Executive Committee Members, and
2. Elections will be supervised by an Electoral Committee and managed by a Chief Electoral Officer. The Electoral Committee will be selected by the outgoing Executive Committee and made up of no less than three union members not contesting the upcoming election. The Chief Electoral Officer shall not be a holder of any Executive Committee or Executive Officer positions or be seeking elections to such positions. These persons are responsible for the planning, conduct and declaration of elections and the appointment and training of Returning Officers to manage the production, distribution, collection and counting of ballot papers.
3. Elections shall be
 - a. held annually at the beginning of each academic year with
 - i. polling dates announced at least fourteen days in advance of the commencement of polling period which is no less than 2 days and no more than 5 days.
 - ii. nominations for contested positions are to be lodged with the Chief Electoral Officer ten days in advance of the commencement of polling
 - iii. subject to the checking of the eligibility of each candidate [see paragraph 6 below, the formal candidate list will be published by the Chief Electoral Officer at least seven days in advance of the commencement of polling.
 - b. conducted by secret ballot, with
 - i. Returning Officers checking eligibility of all intending voters
 - ii. Ballot boxes collected continuously and securely stored by the Chief Electoral Officer,
 - iii. Counting not commencing until the close of the last polling day.
4. The Electoral Committee will encourage and assist candidates to present to union members their credentials and arguments for election.
5. At the annual elections, members will vote for:
 - a. A President, and
 - b. 12 Executive Committee Members whose membership ensures balanced representation from different international geographic regions and the two campuses of the university. [Paragraph XX below defines nomination processes and ballot paper arrangements designed to achieve this.]
6. For election to the Presidency, the candidate that receives the most number of votes will be nominated to the University for its approval.

7. Executive Committee positions will be assigned between constituencies representing broad geographic regions of origin of members and the North and South Campus of the university.
 - a. each geographic constituency,
 - i. Africa
 - ii. Central Asia and the Middle East
 - iii. Europe
 - iv. North and South East Asia
 - v. North, Central and South America
 - vi. Oceania
 - vii. South Asia and Indian Ocean,

and
 - b. campus constituency
 - i. North
 - ii. South
8. Each candidate may nominate for only one geographic and/or only one campus constituency.
9. The candidate who receives the most number of votes in each constituency will be appointed to the Executive Committee. A further three Executive Committee positions will be filled by the candidates who receive the most number of votes irrespective of the constituency contested.
10. To be eligible to nominate for election to these positions:
 - a. A candidate for President will
 - i. be an enrolled international student of the university whose enrollment is anticipated to continue for the full period of the term of office of the upcoming Presidency, usually 12 months
 - ii. have successfully completed at least two semesters of full-time study at the university,
 - b. A candidate for the Executive Committee will
 - i. be an enrolled international student of the university whose enrollment is anticipated to continue for the full period of the term of office of the upcoming Executive Committee, usually 12months.
11. The Executive Committee [Elect], Chaired by the President [Elect], will select, from within the Executive Committee, persons to the positions of Vice President, General-Secretary and Treasurer whose roles, authorities and obligations are set out in Appendix 1 to this constitution, as are the rules for filling casual vacancies in these positions. No one person can hold more than one of the positions designated in this clause.
12. The Chief Electoral Officer will report the outcome of general election and the Executive Committee selection of other Executive Officers to the University and seek University ratification of the appointment of the President, Executive Committee and

the respective Executive Officers and, subject to such ratification, advise the union members of the appointments.

13. The Executive Committee will make, and amend from time to time, rules for the fair conduct of elections as shown in this Appendix.
14. Consistent with its democratic principles, arrangements for all union elections will seek to encourage the informed participation by as many members of the union as possible.
15. The Electoral Committee and the Chief Electoral Officer will take such measures as to safeguard the secrecy of the ballot and to protect the integrity of the election processes, whether conducted by electronically or by paper ballot.
16. The Electoral Officer will report the outcome of elections to the university and seek university ratification of the appointment of the incoming Executive Committee and respective Executive Officers and, subject to such ratification and the resolution of electoral complaints, advise the union members of the appointments.
17. Any disputes arising out of the election can be brought before the Electoral Committee, within three days after the end of the election. The Electoral Committee will seek to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant within seven days of receipt of the complaint. Formal announcement of the election result will be suspended until the complaint is resolved. If the complainant remains unsatisfied the dispute will be referred to an Election Disputes Committee comprised of one nominee of the outgoing President of the union and two nominees of the university. The decision of the Election Disputes Committee will be final and binding on all the parties to the complaint.