

# **1THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SKULL AND BONES SOCIETY OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Founded December 1912

Constitution last Ratified & Approved  
March 2, 2016

## **PREAMBLE**

This upper-class society of The Pennsylvania State University will henceforth be known as The Skull & Bones Society. Its primary purpose will be to recognize and honor deserving seniors from all phases of student leadership in the University community. The Skull and Bones society seeks to honor deserving members who have broad areas of involvement and have given of themselves selflessly in service and leadership.

## **ARTICLE ONE – NAME**

This organization is known as The Skull & Bones Society of The Pennsylvania State University. Henceforth, in this constitution, it shall be referred to as The Society.

## **ARTICLE TWO – MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS**

- At all times, the majority (50%+1) of all active members shall be full-time, officially registered students at University Park.
- The organization will consist of the Undergraduate, Associate, Alumni/ae, and Honorary members as defined below:
  - Undergraduate students of The Pennsylvania State University at University Park are eligible for membership from the start of their 6<sup>th</sup> semester through graduation. Only currently registered students are eligible for active membership.
  - Associate members are initiated while enrolled in a graduate degree program at University Park and are currently in a graduate degree program at University Park.

- Alumni/ae members are alumni/ae of The Pennsylvania State University residing in the State College area who were initiated as undergraduate or graduate students.
- Honorary members, not necessarily alumni/ae of the University, may be selected from the faculty or staff of the University or the University community. Individuals who are tapped as Honorary members will not be considered “Graduate” members should they be enrolled in a graduate program at University Park.
- The Alumni/ae chapter will consist of members initiated into The Society that are not part of the Active Chapter.
- The Society will have at least three (2) Skull Sessions per semester during the academic year – September through May. Additional Skull Sessions may be called at the President’s discretion.
- For each year after the first year of membership, an annual membership fee will be assessed for members of the Active. The amount of this fee will be used to fund The Society’s social events & official functions.

### **Active Chapter Definition**

- This is defined as those who are actively contributing to a majority of Skull & Bones meetings and events and also those who have paid dues within the past calendar year.
- Active Members are considered registered, full time undergraduates and/or full or part-time graduate students
  - Only active members may hold office, vote, preside, officiate, or solicit funds on behalf of the organization

### **New Membership and Recruitment**

- Any and all new members will be given full disclosure during recruitment, including but not limited to the disclosure of:
  - New Membership Manual
  - Schedule of New Member Events and Activities
  - A list of responsibilities

- A copy of the University Hazing policy, prescribed by Policies and Rules for Student Organizations (This documents will be available upon request by the Office of Student Activities).
- All members, including but not limited to new members and recruits, reserve the right to refrain from participating in any activities without consequence, based upon personal/religious beliefs, personal values, or moral reserve as defined by the member.
- Any and all interaction/activity between members and/or new members will be limited to guidelines stated by university policy, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

### **Removal of Membership**

- Here are the nullifications by which membership in the society can be nullified. This will be concluded by a majority vote of the Active chapter.
  - Any member of the society who is charged with criminal offense and has either pled guilty or admitted guilt, or under due process of law has been found guilty.
  - Any member of the society who is deemed to have compromised the core values for membership in the society
- Should a member be acquitted of all charges under a jury of his or her peers, a removed member may be reinstated by a majority vote of the Active chapter.
- President and Vice President handle mediation procedures

### **Meetings**

- The Society will meet at least two times per semester.
- Adequate advance notice must be given to the Active chapter.
- The President with the consent of the Vice President may change meeting frequency.
- Members shall be notified of all meetings by e-mail.
- The President may call special meetings should he/she see fit.

### **ARTICLE THREE - VOTING**

**Only active, currently registered student members may vote. No one involved in conducting the elections may be an official candidate.**

- A quorum will be one more than half the number than of all the undergraduate members of the Active Chapter present. (I.e. if there are 29 undergraduate members, 17 alumni/ae members, 9 associate members, and 15 honorary members in the Active Chapter, the quorum would be 15. This does not have to be 15 undergraduate members, but 15 from the total membership of 70.)
- If there are not enough members present to achieve a quorum as defined above, this clause may be amended by those members present provided it can be established that all members were duly notified of the meeting in a suitable amount of time prior to the meeting. In this instance, the quorum will be one more than half the members present.
- All voting will be proceeded by open discussion and conducted by a show of hands. There will be no secret ballot taken on any subject, except in the election of officers (see Article Five).
- Votes will carry by a simple majority, except in the selection of new members (see Article Four). The President will refrain from voting, except in the selection of new members and in the election of new officers, and cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie.
- The President will preside over all Skull Sessions and, with the assistance of the Vice President, will tally any votes, which will then be recorded by the Secretary.

### **ARTICLE FOUR – SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

Tap Meetings will be conducted once in the Fall and once in the Spring of each academic year for the purpose of selecting individuals who will be offered the opportunity to join The Society. The President shall chair these meetings.

- The voting shall be conducted as outlined in Article Three.
- There will not be less than ten (10) members in the Society or more than 1 undergraduate member for every 1,000 students of the University Park undergraduate student body in the Active Chapter. Therefore, the number of undergraduate members

to whom membership may be offered depends upon the number of undergraduate members who will remain in the Active Chapter through the next Tap Meeting. This number should be calculated by the officers and announced at the start of the tap meeting.

- Membership may be offered to one (1) new Graduate and two (2) new Honorary members selected for each class in addition to the number of undergraduates that may be selected.
- All of the available openings do not have to be filled, and should not be filled, if the Active Chapter feels that there is a shortage of deserving individuals.
- There will be no discrimination based on race, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or affiliation with any PSU organization – with the exception Parmi Nous. No member of The Society may also be a member of Parmi Nous. This should be made very clear to those individuals to whom The Society offers membership.
- In selecting new members the voting members will take into consideration the general qualifications of the candidates rather than a proficiency in one particular line of endeavor. All effort should be made to get well-rounded members and to achieve a membership of individuals of many different interests. Where other qualifications are equal, preference should be given to the person who is prominent in more than one activity or area of expertise.
- Any member of the Active Chapter may inform the Secretary at any time of his or her wish to no longer be a part of the Active Chapter. At this time, this person will become part of the Alumni/ae membership.

## **ARTICLE FIVE – ELECTION AND DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**The election of the Executive Board of the Active Chapter will be held soon after the Spring Initiation Ceremony. Only undergraduate members, or those whom were initiated as undergraduates, may hold an elected office in The Society.**

- The Executive Board of The Society is composed of: President, Vice President, Secretary, Alumni Chair, Historian, University Relations Chair, Social Chair, and Community Service Chair.

- The term of office will be until elections are held the following Spring (approximately one year).
- A person can serve for no more than two terms in the same office.
- Voting for the Board will be outlined in Article Three with the following additions:
  - Only full-time undergraduates may seek or hold office in accordance with the rules of the Office of Associated Student Activities. Those seeking an office may contact members prior to the election meeting to announce their candidacy and request support. If the Active Chapter sees fit that if an Alumni/ae member, whom was tapped as an undergraduate, may run got an office with four/fifths (4/5) quorum. This is a senior class society; at no time should the President be someone who has not enjoyed the University's undergraduate experience.
- If a member is unable to attend an election meeting, that member may submit a written ballot to one of the officers for their choice in nominating or in voting.
- Formal nominations will be opened at the start of the election meeting. The candidates may nominate themselves or be nominated by another member.
- After formal nominations close, the voting will take place in this order:
  - President, Vice President, Secretary, Alumni Chair, Historian, University Relations Chair, Social Chair, and Community Service Chair
- The candidates for President may address the group if they wish. After these remarks, the Presidential candidates must leave the room while the voting for their office is conducted.
- They should complete a ballot prior to leaving the room and leave it with one of the current officers.
- Voting for the rest of the board will follow the same procedure as outlined above.
- Voting will be conducted by secret paper ballot.
- No one involved in conducting elections may be an official candidate

## **Duties of the Board**

- **President:**
  - To call all meeting and preside over such meetings.
  - To represent The Society in all matters with the administrative officers, faculty, or staff of the University, unless they request another member or members of The Society to perform this duty.
  - To maintain the information which is provided to individuals upon accepting membership in The Society and outlining the procedures they must follow to be prepared for the Formal Initiation Ceremony (see Article Six). This information will be passed on to the next President at the completion of a term in office.
  - To represent The Society on the HAT Society Council, should it be revived.
  - The President shall serve as the official liaison between Parmi Nous and Lions Paw.
  - To act as co-coordinator during the initiation process with the Vice-President.
- **Vice President:**
  - Vice President will perform the duties of the President in their absence and shall assume other duties as may be assigned by the President.
  - If the president is unable to complete a term of office the Vice President will then become President and a new Vice President will then be elected.
  - The Vice president shall serve as the Tap Chair of The Society. This would include as a minimum the maintenance of a proper and orderly procedure as it pertains to membership intake.
  - The Vice President shall serve as the Rituals Chair of The Society. This would include maintaining all pertinent information regarding initiation and the adherence to proper procedure at all times during the initiation period.

- The Vice President will maintain all financial records and transaction of The Society by serving as the Society's Treasurer and will pass these records on to the successor at the end of the term of office.
- The Vice President will be responsible to collect the initiation fee (see Article Six) and the annual membership fee (see Article Two). All money belonging to The Society will be placed on deposit in The Skull and Bones Society account with the Treasurer of the Associated Student Activities.
- Secretary:
  - To keep the minutes of all Skull Sessions of The Society and any other correspondence of a non-financial issue.
  - To notify the members of the time, date, location, and purpose of each Skull Session called by the President at least one week prior, if possible.
  - To keep all membership records of The Society for both the Active Chapter and Alumni/ae members.
  - The Secretary will have a copy of this Constitution for reference at all Skull Sessions.
  - At the end of the term of office the Secretary will pass on all membership records and a copy of the current Constitution to the successor.
- Alumni Chair
  - The Alumni Chair will help with the maintenance of alumni/ae records, prepare and send out an "Alumni/ae Newsletter" several times a year, and plan and assist in an annual Alumni/ae reunion during the summer Arts Festival.
- Historian:
  - The Historian will maintain an accurate portrait of The Society's activities within the academic year so elected, through photographs, newspaper articles, event programs, and other items related to members of to The Society.
  - The Historian will ensure the accuracy of files related to The Society's alumni/ae members in the Penn State room of the Patee Library, the



Alumni Association database, or another depository of information regarding members.

- University Relations Chair
  - This Chair will seek opportunities for engagement within the University where the collective experiences and wisdom of the society can be of use in developing policy or reaching out to students.
- Social Chair:
  - The Social Chair will coordinate all social activities of The Society in coordination with the President and Vice President.
- Community Service Chair
  - The Community Service Chair will coordinate all community service opportunities for the society.

## **ARTICLE SIX – INITIATION: INFORMAL AND FORMAL**

**The initiation of individuals accepting membership in The Society will be held within three weeks of the Tap Meeting.**

- The Informal Initiation will be used to test character, stability, and patience. It shall not be more or less standardized each year as its procedure will be determined by the members of the Active Chapter.
- The Formal Initiation Ceremony: The President and the Vice President will have the procedures for the ceremony and the Vice President will inform the members of the Active Chapter as to how the ceremony will proceed, in the constitution with the President. The Secretary and Treasurer should also have a copy of the Formal Initiation in their records given at the time of elections.
- The Formal Initiation Ceremony will consist of:
  - The following explanation of The Society by the President: In recognition of you service to the University community, the Brothers and Sisters of The Skull and Bones Society extend to you an offer of membership. The Skull and Bones Society was organized in 1912 with the purpose of

eliminating false pride, excessive self-esteem and grand ideas of personal glory, and to honor humble and unselfish service.

- A review of the history, aims, and accomplishments of The Society by Alumni/ae member.
- The Oath given to new members by the President.
  - The Oath of The Society is as follows: “I, (new member give full name), do solemnly swear to keep inviolate the aims and ideals of The Skull and Bones Society of the Pennsylvania State University; to reveal none of the secrets of The Society; and to protect its reputation as a great institution.”
- The secrets of The Society will be explained by the Vice President.
- An initiation fee will be assessed of all new members. The amount of this fee will be determined on an annual basis by the Active Chapter. This amount will be based on information provided by the Vice President, which is to include the amounts of past fees and the current rate of inflation.
  - This fee should never exceed the projected annual operating expenses of The Society and should be established with regard to the fact The Society harbors no form of economic discrimination. Exceptions in payment of the initiation fee can be determined by the Active Chapter.

## **ARTICLE SEVEN – SYMBOL**

- The Symbol of The Society will be a Skull and Crossed Bones with The Society’s keystone and the number “1912” under the vertex of the crossed bones. This symbol will appear on all official documents, clothing, rings, pins, and paraphernalia of The Society.

## **ARTICLE EIGHT – SECRETS**

- The secrets of The Society will include the meaning of The Symbol, the name of The Society, of a HAT society, and the Legend of Skull and Bones.

## **ARTICLE NINE – AMENDMENTS**

- Amendments to this constitution may be introduced at the conclusion of any meeting. Voting shall occur at the meeting following its introduction, with the amendment taking effect following Office of Student Activities approval.
- Any member may introduce a constitutional amendment at the conclusion of any meeting. At the following meeting, the Active chapter shall vote on the amendment, as outlined in the article on voting. If the amendment passes, it shall be sent to the Office of Student Activities for approval.
- All amendments are subject to the approval of the Office of Student Activities.
- The Constitution may be amended by a four/fifths (4/5) vote of the quorum.

## **ARTICLE TEN - ACCESSIBILITY OF THIS CONSTITUTION**

- Copies of this constitution shall be made available to anyone upon request.

## **ARTICLE ELEVEN- ADVISOR**

- As a grandfathered organization founded prior to August 1, 2004, this organization does not require an advisor. Should the Society decide that they wish to appoint an advisor, a majority vote of the Society is required to approve the new individual.

## **ARTICLE TWELVE - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

- Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, by Sarah Corbin Roberts shall be used in all cases not covered by this constitution.

## **ARTICLE THIRTEEN- FINANCES**

- All organizational funds are to be deposited and handled exclusively through the Associated Student Activities (ASA) in 240 HUB.
- This organization will not have an off-campus account(s)
- This organization shall collect dues that will not be excessive.
- The Vice President, with the consent of the President will determine dues.
- Dues shall be collected semi-annually
- The Officers of the Society may spend up to \$50 of the organization's funds without the approval of the general membership.