



*The Constitution
Of the Virginia Young Democrats
At the University of Virginia*

As today's students and tomorrow's leaders, we must encourage the spread of the ideas and plans of action that will move Virginia and the rest of the country forward in a positive fashion. The pursuit of Democratic solutions and execution of the policies of the Democratic Party are the surest ways to achieve that end. Striving for equitable and just policy outcomes everywhere, we establish the Virginia Young Democrats at the University of Virginia as the representative organization of the Democratic Party in the University of Virginia community. We accept the following document as the constitution of the Virginia Young Democrats at the University of Virginia.

Article I: Name, Affiliation, Purposes

Section 1: Name

This organization shall be named "The Virginia Young Democrats at the University of Virginia." In this constitution and for all organizational purposes, it shall be referred to, hereafter, as the University Democrats.

Section 2: Affiliations

The University Democrats shall maintain the status of a Contracted Independent Organization as defined by the University of Virginia. To the extent financially and ideologically practicable, the Organization shall affiliate with regional, state, and national organizations of Young Democrats recognized by the Democratic Party of Virginia.

Section 3: Purposes

The purposes of the Organization shall be:

- a)** to provide active support to Democratic nominees for national, state, and local elective office;
- b)** to perform acts of community service throughout the University, Charlottesville, and Commonwealth, in keeping with the Democratic goals of civic efficacy, popular involvement in social issues, and aid to the University's neighbors and surrounding communities;
- c)** to promote cooperation and communication among socially and politically concerned individuals and organizations within the University community;
- d)** to foster discussion about and provide education on public issues of concern to members of the University community;
- e)** to endorse, as it shall see fit, candidates and slates in non-partisan elections for public and/or student office, as provided in Article III Section 7; and
- f)** to seek strength through diversity, acceptance through understanding, fellowship through collaboration, and change through action among Democratically-minded students at the University of Virginia, and their supporters, in political and social activities.

Article II: Membership

Section 1: Qualifications for Membership

Every enrolled student of the University of Virginia who shall support the principles of the Democratic Party shall be eligible as a voting member effective at the third membership meeting attended in any academic year, provided dues are paid under provisions of Article II Section 3.

Section 2: Non-Discrimination Policy

The University Democrats at UVA does not restrict its membership, programs, or activities on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity, marital status, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, veteran status, and family and genetic information

Section 3: Enrollment and Dues

Every person qualified, as provided in Article II Section 1, shall be enrolled as an eligible voting member by the Treasurer upon payment of dues of ten dollars or some other amount agreed to at the beginning of the academic year by two-thirds of the Executive Board. Dues payment shall continue such person in membership for the remainder of the academic year. The Executive Board, at its discretion, may waive payment of dues by a member in exceptional financial hardship.

Article III: Meetings and Activities

Section 1: Regular Membership Meetings

Regular membership meetings shall be held each Wednesday evening, except for public and University holidays, during the fall and spring semesters. The Executive Board shall, in the face of unforeseen and extreme circumstances, be able to reschedule or cancel a week's meeting by an absolute majority vote of the Executive Board.

Section 2: Special Membership Meetings

Special membership meetings shall be called by the Executive Board, or upon the written request of one third of the eligible voting membership, submitted to an officer, provided that the meeting shall be consistent with Article III Section 6; further, no such special meeting shall be held save on the evening of a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday during the fall and spring semesters, nor shall any special membership meeting be held on a public or University holiday.

Section 3: Nomination and Amendments

The second to last regular membership meeting of the spring fall semester shall be designated the "Nomination and Amendments Meeting." At said meeting, the Executive Board shall report on the previous year's achievements and the effectiveness of the plan that had been laid out. After the current Executive Board has presented the performance of the organization, candidates for the coming year shall be nominated as provided in Article IV Section 2.

Section 4: Election Meeting

The last membership meeting of the fall semester shall be designated the "Election Meeting" at which officers for the coming year shall be elected as provided in Article IV Section 2.

Section 5: Rules Governing Membership Meetings

The following rules shall apply to all membership meetings, unless otherwise noted:

- a) Notice of the date, time, and place of all membership meetings shall be submitted to the University's print media and distributed through electronic mail not less than three calendar days prior to the meeting;
- b) All membership meetings shall be held on the University grounds in a generally convenient location;
- c) The agenda for the membership meeting, written by the President, shall be read or posted at the beginning of each meeting;
- d) One-fifth of the eligible voting membership shall constitute a quorum;
- e) Meetings of the University Democrats are open to all interested parties unless declared closed by the President according to a two-thirds vote of the membership or a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board;
- f) Any member who has not either paid dues in full or had their dues waived shall not be permitted to vote; and
- g) No proxy voting shall be allowed at membership meetings.

Section 6: Candidate Endorsements

The University Democrats may endorse Democratic nominees for national, state, or local office, and may choose to endorse candidates in any non-partisan election for local or student office. The University Democrats shall not endorse any candidate in a national, state, or local primary. An Endorsements Committee, for which any eligible voting member is eligible, may be formed to hold endorsement interviews of candidates. Should a candidate not be present for endorsement interviews, the candidate may furnish information on their platform to the Endorsement Committee and request to be reviewed for endorsement. The Endorsements Committee shall make recommendations based on an absolute majority vote of the Committee, and convey this report to the Executive Board. Official candidate endorsements shall be made by a three-fourths vote of the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall take the report of the Endorsements Committee into serious consideration, but will not be bound by these recommendations. It shall be the right of any candidate seeking the endorsement of the University Democrats, or a designated representative of that candidate, to appear and speak before the University Democrats at a membership meeting, whether or not such candidate is a member of the University Democrats.

Section 8: Positions on Public Issues

The University Democrats may adopt a position on any question of public interest by a three-quarters vote at any membership meeting.

Section 9: Voting

- a) Any reference herein to an "absolute majority," "two-thirds vote," "three-fourths vote," or "four-fifths vote," shall mean not less than an absolute majority or two-thirds, three-fourths, or four-fifths of the eligible and present voting members, respectively; and
- b) A quorum must be present to vote.

Article IV: Officers and Elections

Section 1: Officers

The officers of the University Democrats shall be a President, Vice President, Campaign Chair, Social Chair, Development Chair, Outreach Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Communications Chair who shall have the respective duties described in the sections below. Officers shall be elected by the methods prescribed in the following sections and shall be eligible to indefinite re-election. All officers shall assume office immediately upon election.

Section 2: Election of Offices

The officers shall be elected in the following manner:

- a)** Nominations shall be taken from the floor for each office at the Nomination and Amendments meeting, the second to last regular membership meeting of the fall semester. Nominations shall be accepted from the opening of the Nomination and Amendments meeting up until that point in the Election Meeting when each office is to be voted upon. All nominations shall require a second and the consent of the nominee
- b)** The election for each office shall be conducted separately at the Election Meeting in the following order: President, Vice President, Campaign Chair, Social Chair, Development Chair, Outreach Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Chair.
- c)** The President shall preside, except over the election for any office for which they shall be a candidate, in which case the President shall appoint an eligible voting member to preside over the election for that office.
- d)** Should two or more persons be nominated for the same office, each candidate shall be given three minutes to speak to the membership, except for candidates for the office of President who shall have five minutes to speak. The candidates shall speak according to alphabetical order by last name.
- e)** Election shall be by secret ballot, with an absolute majority required for election. Should an election result in a tie or should no candidate obtain an absolute majority, a runoff election between the two candidates with the highest number of votes shall immediately follow the initial ballot. After one runoff; if there is still no candidate receiving the absolute majority, the two candidates who advanced to the runoff will answer questions from the membership in attendance for three minutes each, or five minutes if the contested office is that of President. A second runoff will then be voted upon, and if that should result in tie, then the outgoing Executive Board shall vote on the office immediately. Each officer shall hold one vote, except for the President who will hold only a tie-breaking vote and all Board members who are candidates for the office who will hold zero votes. This subsection shall not apply to any office for which there shall be only one nominee; such nominee shall be deemed elected by acclamation.
- f)** The election process may be conducted using paper ballots or an online voting system, as determined by a majority vote of the current executive board.
- g)** Option of a question-answer session: The question-answer session will be initiated if a motion is made before the first candidates' speech begins for the office in question. It will require a motion for inclusion of a question and answer session by a member present and eligible to vote in the officer election. It must be seconded by another eligible and present voting member. Upon being seconded it will be submitted to a voice acclamation vote of the membership. If it does not receive universal support, it will be submitted to a secret ballot. The question answer session will only be initiated if it receives support via voice acclamation or two-thirds of the vote in the secret ballot. If initiated, each candidate shall have a question answer period following their speech. It shall last no longer than five minutes of candidate speaking time for the position of President and Vice President, and no longer than three minutes of candidate speaking time for all other positions. Candidates shall field questions only from eligible, present voters as recognized by the presiding officer of the elections. Candidates shall spend no longer than one minute thirty seconds answering each question. All procedures pertinent to the question answer session may be amended for a particular office on a particular election subject to temporary amendment presented before the first candidate speaks in the race in question. The temporary amendment must be proposed and seconded by eligible, present voters, and is subject to approval by universal voice acclamation, or two-thirds support in a secret ballot.
- h)** Should a candidate for the Executive Board plan to be withdrawn from the University in good standing for the spring or fall semester or have a class conflict, they may, excepting the office of President, run for office at the Election Meeting making their intentions clear to the membership and defer serving while they are away. The candidate should run for office on a ticket with another member who would serve in their place while the candidate is away if elected. This ticket shall be considered as a single candidate for the purposes of election and both members of the ticket shall be required to attend the first transition meeting.
- i)** Any individual may accept a nomination for and be a candidate for no more than three positions.

Section 3: Executive Board

The officers shall constitute an Executive Board, which shall meet at least twice each month during the fall and spring semesters, on the call of the President with not less than forty-eight hours' notice to all officers. Meetings of the University Democrats Executive Board are open to Executive Board members and invited guests only. The Executive Board shall have general supervision of the affairs of the University Democrats between membership meetings, make recommendations to the membership, approve by a two-thirds vote all expenditures not included in the budget, and perform such other duties necessary, including but not limited to those specified by this constitution, as are not inconsistent with this constitution or the orders of the membership. Two-thirds of the officers shall constitute a quorum. Proxy votes shall be used infrequently and are allowed only when the absent Executive Board member has notified the Secretary of their absence and informed the Secretary of their vote prior to the Executive Board meeting.

Section 4: Transition

The members of the outgoing and incoming Executive Boards shall meet at least once before the first regular membership meeting of the spring semester. This allows the immediate past officers an opportunity to acquaint their successors with their duties and with the plan each office and committee shall have prepared with respect to their particular functions for the coming year along with a budget for those activities and a list of the previous year's expenses. At said meeting all necessary records and materials shall be turned over to the current officers by the immediate past officers.

Section 5: President

The President shall:

- a)** preside at all membership meetings, save as provided in Article IV Section 2 (c);
- b)** call meetings of the Executive Board as provided in Article IV Section 3, and preside at all such meetings;
- c)** supervise the work of all offices and committees;
- d)** prepare and file the documents necessary to maintain the affiliations of the University Democrats as provided in Article I Section 2;
- e)** speak on behalf of the University Democrats to the University community and the general public;
- f)** be responsible for securing membership meeting place and informing membership of said meeting through weekly electronic mailing;
- g)** be responsible for providing the year-long plan for the University Democrats at the first fall meeting; and
- h)** be responsible for providing membership recruitment plan at the first fall meeting.

Section 6: Vice President

The Vice President shall:

- a)** preside at membership meetings in the absence of the President;
- b)** be responsible for planning a program for each weekly membership meeting. Programs may include but are not limited to speakers from both inside and outside the University, forums for discussion, and legislative or political updates;
- c)** establish and maintain relations with other on-grounds organizations in order to promote common Democratic interests; and
- d)** prepare and coordinate active membership recruitment.

Section 7: Campaign Chair

The Campaign Chair shall:

- a)** be responsible for the coordination of University Democrats' campaign activities for all local, state, and national elections;
- b)** maintain contact and relations with all affiliated organizations, including the state Democratic party and Charlottesville City Democrats;
- c)** keep the University Democrats abreast of legislative activities at local, state, and national levels; and
- d)** be responsible for planning and coordinating the University Democrats' efforts to register voters both within the University community and in the larger communities of Charlottesville and the Commonwealth.

Section 8: Social Chair

The Social Chair shall:

- a)** conduct all social activities at the beginning of and throughout the semester to develop the membership base;
- b)** work closely with the Vice President in planning weekly programs;
- c)** plan social events for the University Democrats in order to promote cohesion among the members;
- d)** plan and coordinate the community service activities of the University Democrats; and
- e)** provide in conjunction with the president and communications coordinator a membership recruitment plan for the beginning of every semester.

Section 9: Outreach Chair

The Outreach Chair shall:

- a)** act as a liaison to minority and women students at the University and student organizations formed on the basis of ethnicity, race, or female gender;
- b)** actively recruit and encourage minority and women students to be University Democrats members;
- c)** coordinate their efforts with other members of the Executive Board in accordance with officers' duties, especially the Vice President in their duties as liaison with other on grounds organizations; and
- d)** work to support the social activities aimed at developing a membership base.

Section 10: Development Chair

The Development Chair shall:

- a)** conduct all fundraising campaigns and events for the University Democrats, including a Summer Fundraiser and Winter Fundraiser;
- b)** maintain and develop the University Democrats' donor database;
- c)** conduct alumni fundraising and outreach events, and maintain an alumni database;
- d)** maintain the status of the University Democrats as an active charter of the Virginia Young Democrats; and
- e)** organize and plan the University Democrats' trip to the Virginia Young Democrats convention.

Section 11: Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- a)** compile the minutes of all membership and Executive Board meetings and make said minutes available to the membership and Executive Board, respectively, at the beginning of the next regularly scheduled meeting;
- b)** record member attendance and maintain the membership rolls of eligible voting members;
- c)** receive and, as the Executive Board or the membership directs, answer all correspondence and written inquiries received by the University Democrats;
- d)** manage the majordomo list and be responsible for the regular addition and deletion of names;
- e)** inform the officers of duties and their pertinent dates as regulated in this constitution;

- f)** serve as the University Democrats historian;
- g)** be responsible for providing an agenda and presentation at the beginning of each membership meeting; and
- h)** be responsible for keeping members informed of internship and job opportunities related to politics.

Section 12: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- a)** maintain the financial records of the University Democrats;
- b)** collect and record membership dues;
- c)** use the records of membership dues to maintain a roster of dues-paid members;
- d)** maintain the University Democrats accounts, making all deposits and authorizing any withdrawals from the same;
- e)** prepare a semesterly budget for the University Democrats for submission to the Executive Board for the calendar year. Upon adoption of the budget, with or without amendments, the Treasurer shall lead the Executive Board in presenting the budget to the membership at a meeting within the first month of the spring and fall semesters;
- f)** Use the records of membership dues to maintain a GroupMe or another instant messaging medium for the purpose of mass communication;
- g)** keep the Executive Board informed of the University Democrats financial status through monthly budget and account balance updates at Executive Board meetings; and
- h)** Prepare and update a budget accessible to all Executive Board members at all times. A clear distinction between short-term and long-term expenses must be present on the budget and transparent to all Executive Board members.

Section 13: Communications Chair

The Communications Chair shall:

- a)** be responsible for publicizing the time and location of each membership meeting;
- b)** publicize all University Democrats events, including procuring and posting event notices, chalking sidewalks, and, when appropriate, obtaining media coverage for events and activities;
- c)** produce a University Democrats newsletter and create and maintain a University Democrats Web page;
- d)** field all media requests to their appropriate members;
- e)** create a publicity plan for the CIO through social media and events on grounds; and
- f)** be responsible for recruitment and PR events (including Days on the Lawn and Activities Fair).

Section 14: Program Managers

Each semester, the Executive Board will designate positions for program managers as they see fit. Program managers will submit written applications that will be reviewed by the executive board before selection. Program managers are responsible for devising a list of semester goals, maintaining regular communication with their advisory board member, and attending at least one exec board meeting to discuss their goals and their ideas for accomplishing them.

Section 15: Vacancies

Upon a vacancy to the executive board, the President shall have the authority to: assume the duties of the position themselves, assign the duties of the position to another board member, or call a special election as they see fit. Should the President vacate the office the Vice President shall serve as acting President until a new President is elected.

Article V: Disciplinary Actions

Section 1: Board Member Removal by the General Body

Any general member may motion for the removal of any board member at any general meeting; such a motion must be passed by a majority of the members in attendance; at the following general meeting, a vote for removal shall be held, and if the vote passes with a two-thirds majority then the board member in question shall be removed. Replacing any board member shall follow the process described in Article IV Section 15.

Section 2: Board Member Removal by the Executive Board

Any current board member may call for the removal of any other board member at any board meeting, followed by a vote for removal; if the vote is passed by a two-thirds majority of the board as a whole—with the accused member having excused themselves, then the board member in question shall be removed.

Section 3: General Member Removal by the Executive Board

By a two-thirds majority, the Executive Board has the ability to suspend and remove a General Member from the University Democrats, as well as ban any person from attending any events hosted or co-sponsored by the organization. Reasons for disciplinary action taken against a General Member might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Inappropriate or unprofessional behavior while representing the University Democrats.
- b) Practicing discrimination of any kind, including but not limited to on the basis of: age, race, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, citizenship status, veteran status, religion, ability, gender identity, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, marital status, or family medical or genetic information.
- c) Committing harassment and assault of any kind, including but not limited to: physical, verbal, or mental harassment, offensive and derogatory remarks, stalking, inappropriate touching, intimidation gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, battery, or coercion, and attempted or completed rape.

Violations of these standards of conduct may be reported to the Executive Board through a continually maintained and readily accessible Google Form titled “University Democrats Incident Reporting Form.” There must be an option for reporters to maintain anonymity.

Article VI: Unaddressed Issues

Should the University Democrats need to take action or adopt a position on an issue not addressed in this constitution, the Executive Board shall decide by two-thirds vote what procedure should be used in the situation.

Article VII: Constitutional Changes

Section 1: Amendments

Any eligible voting member of the University Democrats may recommend an amendment to this constitution. Amendments shall take effect immediately upon approval by a two-thirds vote of the quorum of eligible voting members. The amendment discussion and voting process shall abide by Robert's Rules of Order. Additionally, time limits for amendment discussion must be set ahead of the amendment discussion. The President, or a board member whom they designate, shall oversee this process.

Section 2: Ratification

- a)** Any eligible voting member, as defined by Article II Section 1 of the University Democrats Constitution, may recommend an amendment to this constitution to be voted on at the Nomination and Amendments Meeting.
- b)** At the meeting prior to the Nomination and Amendments the President will notify the attendants of the amendment process and where to access the organization's Constitution. This notice is to be included in the Secretary's minutes made available to all members following the meeting prior to the Nomination and Budget Planning Meeting, as required by Article IV Section 11a. This requirement will be mandatory beginning three days following the ratification of this amendment.
- c)** All Constitutional amendments must be submitted to both the President and the Secretary five days before the Nomination and Budget Planning Meeting. The text of the proposed amendments will be included in the meeting notice by electronic mail required by Article III Section 6a.
- d)** There is to be a question and answer session preceding the vote on each amendment where whoever introduced the amendment will explain its intention, and then will answer questions about the amendment. The explanation and questions and answers are not to exceed five minutes.
- e)** Following the question and answer session, there will be time to speak in favor or against an amendment. There will be a time limit for the total amount of time spent speaking in favor or against each amendment set a motion of the members present. There must be the opportunity for at least one member to speak in favor or against each amendment. First, a member who did not propose the amendment may speak in favor of the amendment, not to exceed one minute. Following a statement in support of the amendment, a member may speak against the amendment. Statements in support of and against the amendment may continue in alternating order until time expires, with no single person speaking for over one minute.
- f)** If there is no statement in support of the amendment, a single statement against the amendment will be allowed. Statements in support of and against the amendment must alternate.
- g)** Amendments which garner general support in their spirit but inspire contentious debate in their wording or some such other factor may be revised in a spontaneous caucus period of all interested members. Any eligible voting member may motion to begin a caucus period and must include a time limit in their motion. The motion must be seconded to go to a floor vote and will be confirmed with a majority of votes. During the caucus period, the amendments' proposer and a collection of interested eligible voting members may alter the text of a proposed amendment. The proposer may then re-submit the amendment to the floor for a vote.
- h)** Amendments shall take effect immediately upon approval by a two-thirds vote of the quorum of eligible voting members. The amendment process may be conducted using paper ballots or an online voting system, but votes must remain secret.
- i)** The President, or a board member whom they designate, shall oversee this process.