

*In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

**MUSLIM STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (MSA)  
OF SSMU**

**CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE I: Name**

The Muslim Students' Association (MSA) of the Students' Society of McGill University

**ARTICLE II: Ideology**

MSA McGill supports events and activities brought in accordance with Quran and Sunnah, according to the way of our righteous ancestors (Assalaf Assaleh, Ahlu Assunna Wal Jama`a). This means that, whether the MSA has a certain position on some issue or not, we accept difference in opinion and promote tolerance, in aim of achieving the true unity of the people: unity of understanding, respect, and tolerance, not identicality.

In a quick definition of "Ahlu Assunna Wal Jama`a", we refer to scholars and people of knowledge of the Prophetic age and those who grew in their schools and were trained on their methodologies, as represented by the mainstream four Sunni schools of thought/jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi`i, and Hanbali). This means that we respect and accept the work of those who grew studying shari`ah in the traditional way (with scholars) before they become independent scholars today - as long as they don't go against the collective agreement of respected scholars (Ijma`).

**ARTICLE III: Vision**

MSA McGill aims to be a benchmark student club that brings together the Muslim community of McGill University and provides them with essential services. It is a platform that facilitates the spiritual and social growth of its members in their efforts to be effective educators and living examples of Islam and to become positive and proactive contributors to all facets of Canadian society.

**ARTICLE IV: Mandate**

The MSA's mandate is to:

- Help Muslim students strengthen their faith, increase their knowledge and understanding of Islam, purify their hearts, deepen their spirituality, develop sound Islamic character based on the directives of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunna, and otherwise draw closer to the goal of complete and sincere submission to God which lies at the basis of the Islamic worldview;

- Establish prayer services for men and women five times daily, in addition to Friday services and special prayers connected with Islamic holidays;
- Facilitate access to information about Islam in various languages for the ethnically diverse McGill community;
- Link, support and unite members of the MSA through the challenges of university life;
- Provide a forum for the training of effective Muslim community workers through participation and coordination of activities for the McGill community;
- Coordinate social activities for men and women;
- Coordinate sports activities for men and women; and
- Provide a link for the McGill community with social and action-based activities in the local Muslim community and around the world.

## **ARTICLE V: Membership**

- 5.1 Membership in the MSA is open to everyone.
- 5.2 Only Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) and Post Graduate Students' Society (PGSS) members are eligible to be elected as officers and to hold voting privileges.
- 5.3 Associated non-voting membership is open to all others.

## **ARTICLE VI: Executive Committee**

- 6.1 The Executive Committee, known as the "Shura Council," shall be made up of one president, referred to as the "Amir(a)," eight (8) publicly elected Shura Council members holding undifferentiated executive positions, and one (1) internally elected Shura Council member caring for the Shura Council internal affairs (Akin VP Internal\*). The Amir(a) shall ensure the proper functioning of the organization by assuming the responsibilities outlined in Section 7.1 of the present document. Each of the ten Shura Council members shall head and be responsible for a coherent portfolio of responsibilities (as outlined in the MSA Detailed Portfolios document), while not being restricted from personally taking up variegated tasks commensurate with his/her interests and experience.

*\* Consult the tasks under this portfolio at the end of the constitution page (added for your reference only, it is not part of the constitution) and the constitution items 11.21 to 11.25*

- 6.2 In case of emergency leave of the Amir(a):
  - 6.2.1. If temporary (Less than 46 days): Amir(a) calls for a special Shura meeting to select (by vote of majority) one of the Shura Council members to assume the Amir(a)'s responsibilities temporarily while s/he is away.
  - 6.2.2. If permanent: Amir(a) calls for a special Shura meeting to select (by vote of majority) one of the Shura Council members to assume the Amir(a)'s

responsibilities temporarily. Then, a by-elections process (for the Amir(a) position only) is conducted within 2 weeks as outlined in Article XI below. If the new elected Amir(a) is from the standing Shura Council, then the person next on the “voted-for shura waiting list” fills in the evacuated position. If this is not possible, then a by-election process for the evacuated shura position is conducted within 2 weeks.

- 6.3 All nine members of the Shura Council must be consulted by the Amir(a) for binding decisions to be made. Only in emergency situations where the necessity of immediate action precludes such consultation is the Amir(a) authorized to take decisions on a unilateral basis (*note: consultation ≠ vote*).
- 6.4 When an MSA issue is put to vote by the Amir(a), the vote outcome is binding.
- 6.5 In case of a tie-vote within the 10-member shura council, the final decision will be taken by the Amir(a).

## **ARTICLE VII: Portfolios**

- 7.1 The Amir(a) shall:
  - 7.1.1. Be the chief executive officer, chief representative, and chief spokesperson of the MSA;
  - 7.1.2. Oversee and assume ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the MSA and for all club activities;
  - 7.1.3. Ensure the smooth running of the MSA as a whole through facilitation of and mediation among the various portfolios of the Shura Council with a vision that is consistent with the MSA mandate;
  - 7.1.4. Chair all Shura Council meetings in person, or through proxy if Amir(a)’s absence is unavoidable; and
  - 7.1.5. Co-sign all financial transactions with the Shura Council member charged with treasury duties.
  - 7.1.6. Giving the final decision in case of tie-vote or conflict
  - 7.1.7. [Managing the MSA official email \(responding, forwarding, delegating...\)](#)
  - 7.1.8. [Observing and enforcing the MSA constitution guidelines](#)
  - 7.1.9. [Interfering to stop/over-ride activities/decisions that go against the MSA vision and ideology](#)
  - 7.1.10. [Keeping the MSA activity as far as possible from political involvement \(neutral, un-involved, ...\)](#)
- 7.2 Other vital tasks, such as those normally associated with the positions of Vice-President Internal/External, Treasurer, Secretary, etc., shall be divided among the Amir(a) and the nine other Shura Council members as prescribed in Article VI above. Such tasks will include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Assuring the establishment of the five daily prayers in the Muslim Prayer Room or other suitable location;
  - Assuring room booking and set-up for Friday prayer services, as well as contacting and scheduling Imam;

- Overseeing the organization and proper functioning of MSA office and Muslim Prayer Room;
- Overseeing the proper functioning of MSA library;
- Assuring regular services during Ramadan, including breaking of the fast and nightly prayer services;
- Arranging for prayers and celebrations to be held on the two holidays of the Muslim calendar, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha;
- Holding regular study circles for both men and women, dealing with various branches of the Islamic sciences and of issues and topics which concern the Muslim student population, as well as students interested in Islam from outside the community;
- Organizing public lectures and events for the benefit of the entire McGill community, as well as the Montreal community at large;
- Overseeing the planning of regular sports and social activities for men and women;
- Bearing responsibility for developing healthy relations with student and community organizations outside McGill, and particularly those in the Montreal area;
- Bearing responsibility for communication within the Shura Council, with other McGill University student organizations, and with the Students' Society of McGill University;
- Maintaining the membership list of the MSA;
- Maintaining the MSA web site and e-mail lists;
- Being responsible for the collection of membership fees;
- Ensuring the funding and financial stability of the MSA;
- Co-signing all financial transactions with the Amir(a);
- Taking minutes at Shura Council and general meetings, and ensuring proper distribution of all minutes; and
- Assuming responsibility for booking and arranging meeting rooms, organizing and obtaining refreshments, and drafting agendas for general meetings.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: Fees**

The MSA membership fees shall be \$5.00/yr. per member, payable at the beginning of the fall semester. Payment of membership fees is required for participation in MSA elections.

#### **ARTICLE IX: Finances**

Every member of the Shura Council shall prepare a budget statement for the tasks under his or her portfolio at the beginning of the year. Once the budget is adopted, the Shura Council member in charge of finances shall form a committee to follow up on the expenses and the revenues of the association. The MSA income statement and overall financial situation must be reviewed at the end of every academic session.

## **ARTICLE X: Meetings**

- 10.1 A Shura Council meeting shall be held at least once per month throughout the fall and winter terms. Summer meetings may be held on an *ad hoc* basis, depending on the availability of Shura Council members. In addition, special meetings may be convened by the Amir(a) as deemed necessary.
- 10.2 Individual members of the Shura Council shall meet regularly with the members of sub-committees working on the tasks that fall within their portfolio.
- 10.3 A General Assembly (GA) shall be held at the beginning of each semester, with the purpose of welcoming MSA members, sharing with them the goals and activities of the MSA for the semester in question, and providing an open forum for all members to share their views regarding said goals and activities.
- 10.4 There shall be a general meeting held in late March for the purpose of electing a new Shura Council.

## **ARTICLE XI: Electoral Procedures and Impeachment Processes**

### *Election Committee:*

- 11.1 Five (5) active members are selected by the Amir(a) at least 3 weeks prior to the election date to form the election committee (EC).
- 11.2 The Amir(a) can choose to head the EC; otherwise, the selected people must agree on a head of the committee. If there is no agreement, the Amir(a) will assign the head of the election committee (HoEC).
- 11.3 Shura members can challenge the selection by voicing their strong objections (objection is binding if voiced by majority of shura members)
- 11.4 If a member of the EC is nominated for the next shura council, s/he is given the choice either:
  - To accept the nomination and leave the EC, where the head of the committee will choose a replacement, OR
  - To decline the nomination and stay on the EC.

### *General Regulations and Definitions:*

- 11.5 Elections shall be held in the month of March during a general meeting called specially for this purpose (see Article X above).
- 11.6 The **HoEC** shall announce the date and location of elections at least two full weeks before the election date. In addition to posting an announcement in the MSA office, the prayer room, through the club e-mail list, and after Friday prayer, the **EC** may, but is not required to, place a notice of elections in the McGill

Tribune and/or McGill Daily. Finally, the EC shall post information on the SSMU Notice Boards in the University Center (Shatner Building).

- 11.7 The EC shall be responsible for the general conduct and execution of the elections and shall fulfill this duty with due diligence and impartiality.
- 11.8 Members of the EC who wish to vote must cast their votes first before the people attending the elections GA
- 11.9 Elections shall be conducted by secret ballot
- 11.10 Definition of an MSA Active Member:
  - Participated in at least 1 MSA event as a volunteer other than the GA's
  - Paid the membership fee (\$5/year)
- 11.11 Eligibility to vote:
  - MSA member (paid the fee) whose eligibility is ratified by at least 1 member of the EC
  - Registered McGill student (must show ID before voting)
- 11.12 Members of the standing Shura Council and EC are allowed to nominate and vote according to the election process guidelines in this article.

*Nomination and Election Procedures (Publicly Elected Positions):*

- 11.13 In accordance with the spirit of Islamic teachings, no member of the MSA shall, in any way whatsoever, actively seek a position on the Shura Council. There shall be no “running” for office in the usual sense of the term. Rather, MSA members will nominate, at least two days prior to the election, their choices for the position of Amir(a), as well as for the eight undifferentiated Shura Council positions.
- 11.14 In order to be eligible for nomination as an MSA Amir(a): the MSA member must satisfy these qualification requirements:
  - (1) Muslim; (2) previous MSA Amir(a) or exec or coordinator, or active member for at least two years who participated in at least 1 GA and 2 MSA events as a volunteer; (3) nominated by at least 3 members, and his/her candidacy is ratified by 2 members of the EC; (4) Endorses the MSA ideology as illustrated in Article II of the constitution.
  - Only if the above criteria set can not be met by any nominee, then, the second criteria set is: (1) Muslim; (2) nominated by at least 5 members, and his/her candidacy is ratified by 3 members of the EC; (3) Current active member who participated in at least 1 GA and 2 MSA events as a volunteer; (4) Endorses the MSA ideology as illustrated in Article II of the constitution.
  - Desired skills and qualities (in order of importance): 1) leadership skills; 2) Shura-oriented but decisive; 3) Having a general Islamic knowledge or student of Islamic knowledge; 4) Management and people skills; 5) Able to deal with media; 6) Bilingual (English and French); 7) Visionary capacity

- The EC will decide on whether the nominee acquires the minimum acceptable level of the desired skills and qualities (majority vote)

*Note: For the level of participation of the nominees, the MSA will start using an “Event/activity Log File” to keep a record of the people joining any sub-committee in organizing MSA events/activities.*

- 11.15 In order to be eligible for nomination for a Shura Council position, an MSA member must: (1) be Muslim; (2) have worked on at least one sub-committee during the preceding year; (3) enjoy the endorsement of at least two members of the EC; and/or (4) be an MSA member having paid the membership fees for the year in question.
- 11.16 On the day of elections, nominees for the position of Amir(a) who fulfill the above conditions shall be listed on a board and elected by the GA via secret ballot. The votes shall be tabulated immediately by the EC in the presence of two witnesses. After the count, the HoEC shall simply announce the name of the person having received the most votes, without detailing the number of votes received by each individual nominee.
- 11.17 Once the Amir(a) has been elected:
- All un-elected nominees for the Amir(a) position are automatically added to the pool of nominees for the Shura Council positions.
  - If applicable (check the following item 11.18): people trained for finances and/or external position are then voted for, elected, and assigned their respective portfolios. Trained people who are nominated by the public but not elected are added to the pool of nominees for Shura Council positions.
  - All nominees for the eight publicly elected Shura Council positions will be presented to the floor and voted upon simultaneously, with each voting member listing a maximum of eight nominees of his/her choice. Ballots listing more than 8 votes will be discarded.
- 11.18 In case the MSA invests in training potential candidates on specific skills:
- The trained people are considered to be nominated by default
  - The EC can choose (i.e. it is optional) to make the vote distributed on pools of candidates to secure the benefit of the MSA from the skills of the trained people.
  - This item can be applied only to finances portfolio and external relations portfolio
  - Pools of candidates, in that case, will be divided into (e.g.):
    - a. Pool of trained candidates for finances portfolio
    - b. Pool of trained candidates for external portfolio
    - c. Pool of nominees for Shura Council positions
- 11.19 In case of a tie vote on the day of elections:
- Second round vote are held immediately in the same GA among the nominees at tie.

- If a tie happens again, then, unless the tie is broken by the drop out of a candidate, the election is done by a random draw from a pool of the nominated candidates at tie.
- A member of the EC makes the draw.

11.20 Election ballots and results shall be kept in a secure location for records and by-elections situations. Election ballots can be disposed of after one year.

*Internal Elections Procedures (Position in Charge of Shura Council Internal Affairs):*

11.21 Nature of the Internal Affairs Shura position: it has the same authority weight as other shura positions by default. Thus, it is not a co-president position

11.22 Eligibility Requirements:

- A previous exec or Amir(a) of MSA McGill or a similar organization, and his/her selection is ratified by the active approval of the majority of the Shura Council members  
OR: A current MSA active member, and his/her selection is ratified by the active approval of all members of the Shura Council
- A registered McGill student
- Students who are first year in McGill are not eligible for this position

11.23 The filling of this position consists of two steps:

- The Amir(a) selects his/her Internal Affairs Shura member and mentions the qualities of the chosen person that justify his/her selection
- The Amir(a)'s selection is ratified by the active approval of the majority of the shura members (general case)

11.24 The internal election process has to be completed before the end of May following the MSA's elections.

- In case the selected and approved VP Internal is among the elected shura members, then his/her evacuated position is refilled with the person next on the "voted-for shura waiting list" that is kept as a record from the MSA elections time. If, for some reason, this is not possible, then by-elections process is held for the vacant shura position within one week.

11.25 As this position is initially selected by the Amir(a), the Internal Affairs Shura member can be dismissed by the Amir(a) once s/he deems his/her services unnecessary/un-needed

*Removal of Amir(a):*

11.26 Motion must be put forth and endorsed by 6 members of the Shura Council (the group should decide on a Group Leader, GL)

11.27 The challenged Amir(a) must be informed of the motion once the GL is selected.

11.28 Motion is passed by a vote of 2 thirds of a GA called for by the GL

- Quorum: 40 active members
- The GL presents the arguments for the removal motion (decency and respect must be observed)
- The challenged Amir(a) must be given the chance to explain/defend him/herself against the arguments brought up for his/her removal, but s/he cannot vote

- The removal GA must be attended by a representative from SSMU for authentication of the results
- 11.29 Once the Amir(a) is voted out by the GA, a by-election process must be completed within 2 weeks (nomination period, voting)
- The Amir(a) should be replaced according to Section 6.2 of this document
  - The Shura Council member with Internal Portfolio will be responsible for administering the election process and meeting the 2 weeks deadline
  - SSMU is notified of the results once by-elections are completed

*Removal of other Shura Council member:*

- 11.30 Motion must be put forth and endorsed by 4 members of the Shura Council
- 11.31 The Amir(a) informs the Shura Council of the motion presenting the arguments for the removal of the concerned Shura member (decency and respect must be observed)
- 11.32 The Amir(a) calls for a shura meeting to vote on the motion
- The full Shura Council must be present
  - The concerned Shura member is given the chance to explain/defend him/herself.
  - The motion is passed and by a vote of 6/9 of the Shura Council (the concerned Shura member cannot vote)
- 11.33 The evacuated position is immediately filled by the person next on the "voted-for shura waiting list"
- 11.34 If this is not possible, a by-election process must be completed within 2 weeks (nomination period, voting)
- The Amir(a) consults with the Shura Council and selects a Shura member to temporarily assume the responsibilities of the removed Shura member until the election process is completed.
  - the Amir(a) will be responsible for administering the election process and meeting the 2 weeks deadline

**ARTICLE XII: Affiliations**

MSA of the SSMU shall be affiliated with the MSA National of the United States and Canada. In addition, MSA may cooperate on a project-by-project basis with other clubs having similar interests or goals.

**ARTICLE XIII: Constitutional Amendment Procedure**

- 13.1 Any member of the MSA may propose an amendment to the Constitution.
- 13.2 In order to amend the Constitution, a two-thirds majority vote at the General Assembly must be in favor of the proposed amendment.
- 13.3 All amendments shall be ratified by the SSMU Council before they take effect.

## **ARTICLE XIV: Bylaws and Policies**

14.1 The MSA shall create and maintain bylaws that cover the operations of the club which are not specified in the Constitution.

14.2 The MSA's bylaws shall not contravene the present Constitution.

## **ARTICLE XV: SSMU Constitution**

15.1 In case of any inconsistencies between the MSA Constitution and the SSMU Constitution, the SSMU Constitution shall take effect.

15.2 If there are any areas not covered in the present Constitution, the SSMU Constitution shall take effect.

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\* For your reference (*not part of the constitution*): Internal Affairs Portfolio

This portfolio is created to look after the often neglected needs of the Shura Council members, as individuals and as a team. Thus it is essential that the Shura members are comfortable dealing with the person holding this position. This is why it is chosen to be "internally elected", i.e. selected and elected of the publicly elected Shura Council members. The tasks under this portfolio are outlined as follows:

- a. Provide advice/consultation on any internal issue concerning the MSA (e.g. conflict-solving)
- b. Monitors the MSA activity to make sure it is inline with the organization's vision and mission.
- c. Maintain a balanced ideology within the MSA activity (as illustrated in the Ideology section of the constitution)
- d. Working with shura members both as a group and individually to:
  - a. Build and develop hard skills (tasks needed to carry out assigned tasks)
  - b. Build skills aligned with personal goals (build skills that they are interested in)
  - c. Build interpersonal skills (communication skills and working with others)
  - d. Enhance group dynamics
  - e. Facilitate discussions and problem solving within shura
  - f. Work on developing/offering training workshops and educational program (Islamic, leadership and management) for the shura members.