

The Architecture and Visual Studies Student Union (AVSSU) Constitution

Revised: May 1, 2019

## **The Architecture and Visual Studies Student Union (AVSSU) Constitution**

The Architecture & Visual Studies Student Union (AVSSU) is the official undergraduate organization of the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design. Dedicated to helping ensure easier access to academic resources and general information, AVSSU provides a direct communication link between the faculty and its undergraduate students. While, working to provide an overall better university experience through social and educational opportunities outside the classroom. AVSSU is operated by an elected executive team and board of representatives.

### **Statement of Acknowledgement of Traditional Land**

“The Architecture & Visual Studies Student Union would like to acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for over 15,000 years. This land belonged to the Wyandot people in pre-colonial times, before changing hands several times from the Haudenosaunee, the Neutral, the Wyandot-Tionontati, and finally ending with the settling of the Anishinaabeg Mississaugas. The territory consists of ceded land, covered under the Toronto Treaty 13 of the Upper Canada Land Surrenders, and the Williams Treaties, as well as unceded land that continues to be contested.

Today, Toronto is the home to many Aboriginal peoples, including First Nation Status Indians, Non-status Indians, as well as Metis and Inuit peoples from across the continent. We can never work to end systemic and institutional violence if we do not center the narratives of Aboriginal peoples in our collective decision-making for social justice and equity. As settlers on this territory, we directly benefit from a colonial culture that has overseen the genocide, systematic oppression, and exploitation of Aboriginal peoples. In order to engage in resistance and solidarity against the injustices inflicted on the Aboriginal people of this land, it is imperative we constantly engage in acts of awareness and decolonization. We would also like to pay our respects to Aboriginal leaders and traditional teachers both past and present, and to any of those who may be here with us today: physically, emotionally, and spiritually.”

#### **Article 1: Name**

1.1 The Architecture and Visual Studies Student Union, forthwith to be referred to as AVSSU.

#### **Article 2: Purpose**

2.1 To officially represent the undergraduate students of the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design and to undertake actions in their common interest transparently. AVSSU looks to foster community amongst its undergraduate constituency and create spaces that are accessible and inclusive.

### **Article 3: Legislation**

3.1 This Constitution is the guiding document for all decisions of the Union. No decisions of the Executive Council, Commissioners, Representative Council, or the annual general members meeting can be done in violation to the principles enshrined in this document.

3.2 In addition to the Constitution, the Division Union shall maintain policy documents to enhance the operation of this Constitution. Changes to those policy documents will be directed by the Executive Council and approved by the General Council in a manner open and accessible to all members.

### **Article 4: Membership**

4.1 All full-time and part-time undergraduate students enrolled in a specialist, major, or minor program within the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design shall automatically be members of the Student Union.

4.2 A membership fee for the entire academic year, included in tuition payments, shall be as approved by the University Affairs board.

4.3 The General Council shall be composed of elected student representatives from all undergraduate programs within the Faculty, Commissioners, and the members of the Executive Council.

4.4 Student representation will be organized to ensure representation of all programs within the Faculty, each program having one (1) representative.

4.5 A position for a commuter and first year representative will additionally make up the composition of the student representative.

4.6 Additional representatives may be assigned to particular program levels in order to ensure the principle of proportional representation of programs within General Council.

4.7 Only General Council has the power to change the number of representatives in Council, following the procedures outlined in the Policy Documents.

### **Article 5: Governance**

**5.1:** AVSSU governing body is composed of four governing bodies: the Executive Council, Commissioners, the General Council, and the Annual General Members Meeting.

AVSSU's governing body shall include the following positions:

- a. Executives:
  - i. President (1)
  - ii. Vice Presidents:
    - 1. Communications (1)
    - 2. External (1)

- 3. Internal (1)
- 4. Academic (1)
- 5. Student Life (1)
- iii. Commissioners:
  - 1. of Equity (1)
  - 2. of Health and Wellness (1)
  - 3. of Sustainability (1)
- b. Representatives:
  - i. Visual Studies:
    - 1. General (1)
    - 2. Studio (1)
    - 3. Critical Practices (1)
  - ii. Architecture, Landscape, Urbanism:
    - 1. Comprehensive (2)
    - 2. Design (1)
    - 3. History and Theory (1)
    - 4. Technology (1)
  - iii. First Year (1)
  - iv. Commuter Life (1)
- c. Staff:
  - i. Design Staff (1)
  - ii. Photography Staff (1)
  - iii. Chief Returning Officer (1)
  - iv. Bookkeeper (1)

#### Honoraria

The photographer, designer, and bookkeeper staff shall receive an honourarium at the end of their term. The amount of this honourarium will be determined under the mechanism set by the Policy Documents.

5.2 A Description of these positions can be found in the Policies Document.

### **Article 6: Meetings**

#### 6.1 Executive Council Meeting (ECM)

- i. Executive Council Meetings (ECM) are only open to members of the Executive, the bookkeeper, and invited guests.
- ii. ECM shall occur at least once a month from September through March.
- iii. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the Executive.
- iv. Three executives, where at least one said member is the President or Vice-President Internal shall constitute a quorum.
- v. At least one meeting shall occur during the summer term.

## 6.2 AVSSU General Council Meetings

- i. Six (6) AVSSU General Council Meetings (ACGM) shall occur throughout the year at the end of each month during the Fall and Spring terms, excluding the months of December and April.
- ii. The ACGM is open to all students, however only Executive Council members, Commissioners, Program Level Representatives have voting privileges.
- iii. Quorum shall constitute 3 (three) elected representatives and 3 (three) members of the Executive Council, where at least one said member is the President or Vice President.

## 6.3 Annual General Members (AGM) meeting

- i. Decisions made at the AGM meeting can only be overturned by future AGM meetings and cannot be overruled by the General Council or the Executive Council.
- ii. The meeting shall be held no later than January 31st of each year and shall be held at such a location, determined by the President, on or in the vicinity of the St. George Campus of the University.
- iii. An assembly of fifteen percent (15%) of AVSSU's membership constitutes a quorum.
- iv. All Members are entitled to vote by proxy at an Annual General Meeting. No person may carry more than 15 proxy votes.

## VII. Financial Statement

The treasurer will submit the projected budget at the Fall town hall meeting and present the financial summary at the AGM in the Spring term.

### 6.2 Townhall

- i. At least one town hall meetings shall be called during the academic year, the date shall be determined by the Executive Council in consultation with General Council. This meeting shall be held during the Fall semester where the AVSSU budget for the fiscal year shall be presented.
- ii. A town hall can be called at any time by a petition of 15% of members of the Union. Once the petition is received by the Executive Council and membership of the petitioners is verified, Executive Council will find the next available date and time to hold said town hall, giving at least 14 days' notice.
- iii. Executive Council can, with a unanimous vote, call for a town hall at any time throughout the academic year.

### 6.3 Meetings with the Dean, Office of Student Services (ORSS), & Program Directors

Two (2) meetings with the Dean, Office of Student Services(ORSS), & Program Directors will be requested each academic year, typically prior to the town hall. The purpose of these

meetings is for the respective Faculty members and Executive Council to debrief one another on matters of importance to the Faculty and undergraduate student body.

### **Article 7: Affiliate organizations**

7.1 May receive funding and promotional support by petition and approval from the AVSSU General Council.

### **Article 8: Elections**

#### 8.1 Elections and Eligibility

All returning undergraduate students enrolled at the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design are eligible to vote and be members of the Executive Council, Commissioners, or Representative. Staff positions are open to recent graduates or current students from the University of Toronto.

8.2 Elections shall be done in accordance to the mechanism set forth in AVSSU Policy Documents.

### **Article 9: Student Levy**

9.1 All full-time and part-time students in the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design will pay into the student levy. The amount of the student levy will be decided following the procedures outlined in the Policy Document.

9.2 A Description of any current levies can be found in the Policies Document.