

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DEMOCRATS

[Last Amended: December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017]

The Columbia University College Democrats (CU Dems) is a political organization for students at Columbia University in the City of New York and a member of the Columbia University Student Governing Board. Chartered with the objective of providing a forum for discussions, debate, and activism reflecting the broad principles of the Democratic Party, the club shall work to further the goals and interests of the Democratic Party, its duly nominated candidates, and the people of the United States.

## Article I. General Club Rules

**Section 1. General Body.** The General Body of CU Dems shall consist of all members of the organization. All members may participate in CU Dems events, may vote on motions before the General Body, and may vote in the election of officers if they meet the voter eligibility requirements as outlined in Article III, Section 5. Any member of the General Body shall be eligible to run for the Executive Board of the organization. Twenty persons shall constitute a quorum for business. Except where otherwise noted, all General Body decisions shall be made by a majority vote. In the case of a tie, the Executive Board shall decide.

**Section 2. Membership.** Membership shall be open to all members of the Columbia University community who are undergraduate students in Barnard College, Columbia College, the School of General Studies, or the School of Engineering and Applied Science. All Columbia University affiliates shall have access to events, but cannot vote in elections. Access may be denied to non-members by the Executive Board.

**Section 3. Revocation of Membership.** Membership may be revoked based upon egregious disruptive conduct at a CU Dems sponsored event or acts directly contrary to the interests of CU Dems. A motion to revoke membership must specifically name the member and the offense committed and may only be raised by a member of the Executive Board. A two-thirds vote of the Board is necessary to call a revocation vote of the member. As soon as the Board vote is over, the member must be informed. At the next Body meeting, the Executive Board will choose a board or body member in favor of revocation to present the case for removal, and the member being revoked will have the opportunity to make a statement in her/his own defense. If the motion is supported by a three-quarters majority vote of the General Body, membership shall be immediately revoked.

**Section 4. Meetings.** Meetings of the General Body shall be weekly during the academic year, subject to cancellation by a majority vote of the Executive Board. All General Body Meetings must be announced in an e-mail sent to the entire General Body e-mail list. This email shall be sent at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. The General Body may only conduct official business at a properly announced General Body Meeting.

**Section 5. Override of Executive Board Decisions.** Any Executive Board decision may be overturned by a two-thirds vote of the General Body. An Executive Board decision to reject a proposed constitutional amendment or to reject impeachment of a Board member may be overturned by a three-quarters vote of the general body.

**Section 6. Body Member Participation** The CU Dems will have open planning meetings at least three times a semester. These meetings will be dedicated working with general body members to allow them to propose ideas for activism and Dems activities. The times will be published by the Membership Director in the weekly body email.

**Section 7. Diversity and Inclusion.** CU Dems is committed to creating a community that is inclusive of and welcoming to students of all identities, that is free from discrimination, and that is founded upon the fundamental dignity and worth of all of its members. Consistent with this commitment, the executive board shall take affirmative steps to engage with and understand identity-based issues including, but not limited to, diversity trainings, official university programming, collaboration with other student groups, identity-based discussion circles.

**Paragraph 1. Accessibility Pledge.** As per the request of the Student Governing Board in the Fall of 2016, and in continued efforts to remain a wholly inclusive organization, the executive board commits to the following statement, and the actions derived therefrom: “We pledge to hold all of our student group events that are on Columbia University’s campus in physically accessible spaces. Physically accessible spaces are defined as spaces that anyone can access via ramps and elevators freely without prior authorization from Public Safety or Disability Services.”

As necessary, this pledge may be reviewed and amended during annual constitutional review.

**Section 8: CU Dems Community Standards Agreement.** To promote a community that is safe and inclusive for all members, CU Dems will ask that all active members sign the Community Standards Agreement, outlining what is expected of the General Body and Executive Board during social gatherings held by CU Dems. See Appendix B for the text of the agreement.

**Paragraph 1. Signing Procedure.** All members of the Executive Board must sign the Community Standards Agreement by the end of the fall board retreat. Lead Activists elected in the fall or any Executive Board members elected in special elections must sign by the end of the spring board retreat. It is the responsibility of the President to explain the Community Standards Agreement, and answer any questions from the Executive Board about the document during the retreat.

During the fall semester, the Executive Board is expected to introduce the Community Standards Agreement to the General Body during the General Body Meeting prior to the first informal social gathering held that year. If no gathering is held, the Executive Board must introduce the Community Standards Agreement in a General Body Meeting prior to the fall campaign trip. Prior to this meeting, the text of the Community Standards Agreement must be sent to all members by the Membership Director via e-mail. During this meeting, the President and Vice-President are responsible for explaining the purpose of the Community Standards Agreement and for answering any questions from the General Body. The log of who has signed the Community Standards Agreement must be available to all Executive Board members.

All participants on the fall and spring semester campaign and lobby trips, or any equivalent event held by CU Dems, will be asked to sign the Community Standards Agreement. The Lead Activists are responsible for confirming that all participants have signed, and for providing copies of the Community Standards Agreement to those who have not previously signed it, answering their questions, and collecting their responses.

**Paragraph 2. Review and Amend.** The Executive Board is responsible for reviewing the text of the Community Standards Agreement at least once per academic year. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the Executive Board or the General Body, and must be approved by  $\frac{2}{3}$  of both groups. An amendment decision by the Executive Board can be overturned by a three-quarters vote of the General Body.

## **Article II. The Executive Board**

**Section 1. Officers.** The Officers of the CU Dems are the President, the Vice President, the Leads, the Media Director, the Treasurer, the Secretary, the Membership Director, the Events Coordinator, and the First-Year Representative. The Webmaster is an ex-officio officer. Together, they shall jointly be called the Executive Board of CU Dems.

**Section 2. Role of the Executive Board.** The Executive Board shall function as the institutional voice of the CU Dems. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Board to advance our progressive mission. To achieve this, the Executive Board has exclusive authority to work with the Student Governing Board, to co-sponsor events with other organizations, and to run the day-to-day business of the organization.

**Section 3. Executive Board Meetings.** The Executive Board shall meet at least once a week during the academic year at a time and place it shall decide, unless the Executive Board votes to cancel the meeting for that week. Executive Board Meetings shall be open to the public, but a motion may be made to remove all non-officers for the remainder of the meeting when debate requires privacy. Such a motion requires only a one-third vote in the affirmative to pass. Attendance at the weekly meetings and all events organized by the CU Dems shall be mandatory for all officers. If an officer cannot attend she/he must inform the President of the fact and why before the meeting or event.

**Section 4. Executive Board Voting Procedure.** Each member of the Executive Board shall have one vote in all decisions. Three quarters of all current officers shall constitute a quorum for business. By a majority vote of the Executive Board, an officer who has a personal interest in an issue under debate may be removed until after the issue has been decided. An officer may choose to recuse him/herself if she/he believes personal interest shall impede an unbiased decision on an issue. Except as otherwise noted, all decisions of the Executive Board are made by a majority vote.

To the greatest extent possible all decisions should be made by the full Board. If a Board member makes a decision in accordance with her or his duties, any other Board member may make a motion to review that decision. Any decision subject to review must be upheld by a majority vote of the Board to go into effect. Voting shall take place at a regular Board meeting, unless a Board member requests an emergency or expedited vote, in which case voting may take place over email.

Any board member may call an email vote, and will be informed of that right at board retreat. An email vote must be formally called, and include the specific language of the measure being voted on. Nine board members must acknowledge they have received notice for an email vote before it may take place.

**Section 5. The President.** The President is the chief executive of the CU Dems and the chief liaison to the administration and SGB. The President shall be in charge of running Executive Board meetings, monitoring attendance at Executive Board meetings, and ensuring that all officers are fulfilling their duties. The President shall be the public face and spokesperson for the CU Dems. The President shall also be responsible for the advancement of the interests of the CU Dems and its mission. The President may appoint a Sergeant-at-Arms to enforce proper conduct at CU Dems meetings and events. The President shall introduce each body meeting.

**Section 6. The Vice President.** The Vice President has two main functions: (1) to help the President with her/his leadership of the Board and Body (2) to serve as liaison to all groups and entities outside the CU Dems. This includes working with other campus groups on co-sponsorships for events and maintaining positive relationships with other political groups on campus. The Vice President shall be responsible for liaising to local, state, and national Democratic organizations, including College Democrats groups on other campuses, or shall delegate to an appropriate Board member. The Vice President shall also be responsible for updating the Executive Board on relevant events and issues with campus groups. If the President is unable to attend a Dems function, the Vice President shall assume the role as chief executive.

**Section 7. The Lead Activists.** The Lead Activists of the CU Dems shall serve as leadership in planning major activism trips throughout the year, as well as fulfill expected Board responsibilities. The four lead activists shall be a part of the CU Dems and at no time shall be considered an independent organization. Leads shall at all times represent the values and views of the organization and adhere to this Constitution. In the course of the calendar year, Lead Activists must organize one lobby trip for the CU Dems and one campaign trip for the CU Dems. The leads shall administer and execute these trips with the support of the Board. The Leads have authority over the application process and decisions regarding trip participants. Board members attending the trips must adhere to the same expectations as all other trip participants and will not receive priority unless their role requires them to aid the Lead Activists on the trips. All applications will be read blind.

All major decisions made by the Lead Activists will be shared at weekly Board meetings or as relevant. Any Board member may make a motion to review a decision of the Leads and any decision subject to review must be upheld by a majority vote of the Board; if a majority does not approve the decision is revoked or shall not go into effect. Voting shall take place at a regular Board meeting, unless the Leads or another Board member requests an emergency or expedited vote, in which case voting may take place over email.

**Section 8. The Media Director.** The Media Director shall be responsible for crafting and disseminating the message of the CU Dems, which should reflect the general consensus of the Executive Board and the General Body. The Media Director shall maintain contacts for all campus and local media and shall be responsible for handling all media questions. The Media Director shall promote the CU Dems, and send press releases about CU Dems events as needed. The Media Director shall also be responsible for managing the content of the CU Dems website, Facebook, and Twitter. The Media Director may delegate some of these responsibilities to a Webmaster if the Board chooses to appoint one.

**Section 9. The Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that all funds allocated by the Executive Board are dispensed in a timely manner. This shall include the provision of vouchers, reimbursements, and other forms of funding to those who require them for CU Dems business. The Treasurer shall be responsible for provision of all food and supplies at CU Dems sponsored events or shall appoint someone to do so. The Treasurer shall give financial advice to co-sponsoring groups and shall ensure that funds promised from other groups are properly provided. At the end of each year, the Treasurer shall prepare a budget for the coming year and shall submit the budget to the Student Governing Board. The Treasurer shall keep records of all CU Dems transactions.

All money spent on behalf of CU Dems must be approved by a majority vote of the Executive Board. Whenever possible allocations should be made by voucher. Money spent to pay for general expenses incurred during a project must be approved beforehand by the treasurer and the president, and a written record should be made that includes the amount and purpose of any expenditure. At any time the Board may by majority vote revoke any and all funds it has delegated, so long as the money has not already been spent at the time of the vote.

**Section 10. The Secretary.** The Secretary shall be responsible for making room reservations for all events sponsored by the CU Dems and shall assist the President as a liaison to the administration. The Secretary must take and publish minutes for all Executive Board meetings and other events as deemed appropriate. The Secretary is to take attendance at CU Dems sponsored events or designate someone to do so. Should the event not be conducive to attendance taking, it is not required that attendance be taken. The Secretary shall update and manage the CU Dems' institutional memory. The Secretary shall also be responsible for updating the Google Calendar with general body meetings, executive Board meetings and special events. The power to interpret the Constitution may be exercised by all board members by majority vote at a regular board meeting. The Board will provide general body members with minutes of the most recent executive board meeting in electronic form.

**Section 11. The Membership Director.** The Membership Director shall serve as ambassador to prospective and current members as well as alumni. The Membership Director, in conjunction with the First-Year Representative, is responsible for running the First-Year Council for each new class of CU Dems according to the guidelines set forth in Article II, Section 13.1. The Membership Director sends a weekly email to the general body listserv detailing the weekly events and meetings of the CU Dems and advertising co-sponsored events and other selected opportunities. She/he is also responsible for maintaining the CU Dems listserv, including adding new members and removing former members upon request. The Membership Director is responsible for recruiting new members. The Membership Director shall be actively involved in the process of engaging prospective members at CU Dems events and meetings.

**Section 12. The Events Coordinator.** The Events Coordinator shall be responsible for all major social events for the CU Dems. Major social events should have a specific focus on the CU Dems community dynamic, membership retention, and political themes. The amount of events is up to the Events Coordinator's discretion, but it is suggested that at least two are planned for each semester. The Events Coordinator will be responsible for planning the CU

Dems Formal in the spring semester. The Events Coordinator shall make sure that all necessary tasks are completed for an event. This includes, but is not limited to: ensuring space and tech are booked, ordering food, publicity, and managing committee members. If another member of the CU Dems wants to plan an event, then the Events Coordinator shall be the point person for making sure that such necessary tasks are completed.

**Section 13. The First-Year Representative.** The First-Year Representative will share recruitment responsibilities with the Membership Director in order to establish an active incoming class of CU Dems. The First-Year Representative, in conjunction with the Membership Director, is responsible for running the First-Year Council for each new class of CU Dems according to the guidelines set forth in Article II, Section 13.1. The First-Year Representative will also serve as the CU Dems representative in the Columbia Political Union. Additionally, the First-Year Representative is largely responsible for helping all Board members fulfill their tasks. All other officers should elicit aid consistently from the First-Year Representative.

**Section 13.1 The First-Year Council.** The First-Year Council shall function as a community-building organization within CU Dems mainly, but not exclusively, for first-year members. The First-Year Representative and the Membership Director shall serve as co-chairs of the First-Year Council. Per the discretion of the First-Year Representative and the Membership Director, the application process and membership requirements will be established at the beginning of every school year. Executive Board members are expected to attend at least one First-Year Council meeting during the school year. The First-Year Council is required to plan at least one first-year bonding event, one GBM, and one campaigning event per semester.

**Section 14. The Webmaster.** The Webmaster shall maintain and regularly update the website of the CU Dems. The Webmaster shall be responsible for adding content and features that the Executive Board decides to be necessary and shall aid all co-sponsoring as the need arises. The Webmaster is not a voting member of the Executive Board. The Webmaster shall also be responsible for helping the Media Director with the technical nature of the blog. In the event that a Webmaster cannot be appointed as described in Article III, Section 7, another member of the Executive Board may fulfill the duties of the Webmaster.

**Section 15. General Officer Duties.** All Executive Board members shall be responsible for a number of tasks, including attending all executive Board meetings and general body meetings. Attending CU Dems organized events is strongly encouraged. If a Board member will be absent, she/he must send a reason to [dems@columbia.edu](mailto:dems@columbia.edu). Board members are also responsible for helping to recruit new body members, and portraying a positive image of the CU Dems in all public behavior.

**Section 16. Limitations.** No person may hold multiple offices on the Executive Board, with the exception of the office of Webmaster, which may be held by an elected Board member.

**Section 17. Violation of Duties.** If a member of the Executive Board violates her/his duties or the Constitution, the Executive Board may by a two-thirds vote recommend to the General Body her/his removal. The Board must vote on removal of a Board member if it is proposed by either three board members or five body members. At the next General Body Meeting, the Executive Board must present its recommendation for removal to the General Body and a removal hearing will be held. The Executive Board will select a time-keeper to preside over the hearing; however, times must be publicly displayed and visible to the body during the entirety of the impeachment hearing. The impeachment hearing must adhere to the following procedure: five minutes must be given to a Board or Body Member in favor of impeachment and designated by the Executive Board to present the case for removal, followed by five minutes given to the Board member being impeached to make a statement in her/his defense, followed by ten minutes of open questions from the Board and Body to either party, followed by two three-minute speeches in favor of impeachment and two three-minute speeches against impeachment, followed by a three minute closing speech in favor of removal and a three minute closing speech against impeachment. No additional time or speeches shall be allocated for speaking to either party; all speeches specified by procedure must be granted unless no party is willing to speak. Questions will be asked in written form, addressed to one or both parties, and chosen blindly and at random. Parties addressed by questions will have one minute to answer each question and no longer. Speakers on behalf of removal will be chosen by a majority vote of the Board; speakers against removal will be designated by the

Board member being impeached. The General Body must vote whether or not to follow the recommendations of the Executive Board immediately thereafter. If the General Body votes with a two-thirds majority to remove, the Executive Board member is removed. If the issue must be acted on in an expedited manner, the Executive Board may temporarily enact its recommendation until the end of the next General Body Meeting. At the next General Body Meeting, the recommendation shall be debated by the procedure stated above and decided. In the event that multiple Board members are under impeachment, each will be given a separate impeachment hearing.

**Section 18. Officer Vacancies.** In case of any vacancy of Executive Board positions, the open position shall be decided by special election during a General Body Meeting. The special election will be held two weeks after the vacancy is announced. The Executive Board will announce the due date for applications. In the event that a vacancy for the position of Treasurer, Secretary, or Lead Activist must be filled immediately, the Executive Board may declare an emergency with  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote and nominate a candidate to be submitted for ratification by the General Body. In the event that the General Body rejects the nomination of the new board member to the Executive Board, a special election will be held to fill the vacancy. All positions besides Treasurer, Secretary, or Lead Activist, must be filled using a special election. Candidates in a special election shall sign the Candidate Pledge specified in Article III, Section 2.

Voter eligibility for special elections is determined as follows:

If special election is held before the Midterm Date in the semester during which it is held, eligible voters must have—

- A) Attended at least three meetings or activist events in the semester during which the election is held
- OR
- B) Participated in a Campaign Trip or Lobby Trip in the semester during which the election is held
- OR
- C) Have been an eligible voter in the regular, semester-end election of the previous semester

If special election is held after the Midterm Date in the semester during which it is held, eligible voters must meet the requirements for voting specified in Article III, Section 9, Paragraph 2 if the election is being held in the Fall, or those specified in Article III, Section 5 if the election is being held in the Spring. The “previous semester” is the Spring Semester of the previous year if the special election is being held in the Fall.

**Section 19. Policies and Institutional Memory.** A time slot must be designated during fall and spring board retreats to review formal and informal policies that Board has agreed to in the past. This discussion is an opportunity for the new Board to officially vote on continuing or discontinuing previous policies for the upcoming semester. The secretary shall maintain a record of these policies and institutional memory -- a record which will be made available to all board members as a constantly updated online document.

### **Article III. Elections**

**Section 1. General Procedure.** Three elections shall be held each year, one within the first three weeks of fall semester, one within the last two weeks of the fall semester, and one within the last four weeks of spring semester. The Executive Board shall determine specific dates of these elections. In the first fall election, the First-Year Representative shall be elected for the current year. In the second fall election two Lead Activists will be elected. In the spring election, the President, Vice President, the other two Lead Activists, Media Director, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Director, and Events Coordinator shall be elected for the upcoming year.

**Section 2. Candidate Pledge.** Candidates shall sign a pledge as follows: “As a candidate for the Columbia University College Democrats Executive Board, I pledge to uphold the election rules stipulated in the Constitution.” No campaigning or nominations shall be allowed and may be considered grounds for elimination from the election. Campaigning includes the use of campaign materials, including but not limited to posters, buttons, and flyers, and any unsolicited communication by a candidate asking people to vote for themselves or explaining why they are the

best candidate. Unsolicited communication includes any electronic, verbal, or written communication that is initiated by the candidate themselves (including but not limited to emails, social media interaction, text messages) or someone the candidate has asked to campaign on their behalf; candidates are permitted to respond to Dem members who independently begin a conversation about the election. No collaboration between candidates will be permitted. Campaign violations can be punished either by a deduction of 5 votes per violation, or disqualification, at the discretion of the Council of Elders.

Beginning two weeks before Election Day, at least one member of the Council of Elders shall attend the final 2 general body meetings of the semester. At the end of each meeting, the member(s) of the Council of Elders shall ask general body members if potential and/or official candidates have campaigned in any way, shape, or form. If wrongdoing is discovered as a result of this investigation, the penalties for campaigning shall be enforced on Election Day and announced before candidate speeches begin.

**Section 3. Application.** One month prior to the spring election, the Executive Board shall publicly disseminate a candidate application to the General Body. In order to be eligible for elections, prospective candidates shall return the application by a date specified by the Executive Board. The applications shall be made public to the General Body at least 48 hours prior to the election. The applications shall also be available at the election.

**Section 4. Council of Elders.** Elections shall be presided over by a Council of Elders consisting of five seniors involved with the CU Dems. The Council of Elders shall be appointed by the current Executive Board. The Council of Elders shall be responsible for voter registration, ballot counting, enforcing time limits, and running the election in an efficient manner.

**Section 5. Eligible Voters.** All persons who appear on the attendance list recorded by the Secretary at 2 CU Dems meetings or activist events in each semester or 3 in the second semester shall be considered eligible voters for the current election. All members of the campaign trip and lobby trip shall be considered eligible voters for the current election. Social events are not considered qualifying events for voter eligibility. If a person does not appear on the attendance list, she/he may register to vote with the Council of Elders (Appendix A). Beginning fall 2013 the rules for voter eligibility for the fall election will be attendance of three meetings or activist events or participation in the campaign trip; for the spring election the requirement is 4 meetings or activist events overall, 3 in the spring semester, or participation in either the campaign or lobby trip.

**Section 6. Procedures.** The election process shall work in the following way:

**Paragraph 1.** Ballots shall be distributed as voters enter the room, each voter receiving only one. Anyone who is not present for every speech given for a position will not be eligible to vote for that position. Voting by absentee ballot or proxy will not be allowed. Anyone voting for a given position must remain present at the venue of the election until a winner is declared.

**Paragraph 2.** The order of elections shall be as follows: President, Vice President, Lead Activists, Media Director, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Director, and Events Coordinator. Unelected candidates may drop down to run for other positions. Unelected candidates may drop down to as many races as they would like. The results of each election will be announced immediately after they are determined. Voting for the next position may not start until the winners of the previous positions have been announced, unless no candidates wish to drop down to that position.

**Paragraph 3.** The speeches for each race shall go in alphabetical order of the last name of each candidate. Candidates shall receive three minutes for speeches, but it shall be permissible to use less time. Candidates that have dropped down from other races shall receive one and a half minutes to give a speech for the new position. Unused time may not be used for questions at this point.

**Paragraph 4.** After all candidates in a race have delivered their speeches, all the candidates in the race shall participate in a question and answer session. Each response will be limited to 30 seconds per candidate and a minimum of three questions should be asked for each position, with additional questions asked at the discretion of the Council of Elders with the intent of providing fair and informative elections. Every question, except those only applicable to a particular subset of the candidates, shall be posed to all of the candidates. If the outgoing board member for the position is not running in that election she/he shall have the opportunity to ask at least one question.

**Paragraph 5.** At the end of each race, all ballots shall be collected. Improperly filled ballots shall be considered invalid and shall be discounted. Other than the Council of Elders, only the current President shall be allowed in the room with the ballots. If the current President is a candidate in a race, she/he shall not be allowed in the room with the ballots for that specific race, but may be in the room with the ballots for all other races. All valid ballots shall be counted. A recount of the ballots may be made at the request of any General Body Member. All ballots shall be secret and shall be destroyed at the culmination of the elections.

**Paragraph 6.** Instant Runoff Rules. All elections will use an instant-runoff system. Voters must rank candidates according to preference from most preferred to least preferred. A voter may rank however many candidates as she/he chooses. If no candidate is ranked first by a majority of ballots then the candidate with the fewest top preference votes will be eliminated and each vote will be distributed to their next highest ranked candidate. This process will continue until one candidate has an absolute majority. If it is impossible for one candidate to reach a majority a second round of voting with the two highest ranked candidates will take place. Before this second round of voting takes place, these two candidates will be asked to make additional one-minute speeches to the voters, and will be allowed to answer questions from the audience (the number of which is per the discretion of the administrator of the election). The tally of vote totals of instant-runoff voting shall never be revealed.”

**Paragraph 7.** Terms. The terms of all officers shall begin at the culmination of their respective elections and shall terminate at the culmination of the first spring election following their election to office.

**Paragraph 8.** Tiebreakers. Ties can emerge in several kinds of situations in instant-runoff voting. Ties shall be broken in the following situations as a follows:

- a. Tie between two candidates in an election, where all other candidates have been eliminated, or where there were only two candidates to begin with. This situation will be governed by the rules set out in Article III, Section 6, Paragraph 6. If this method fails to yield a winner, the winner will be decided by a secret instant run-off vote of the Executive Board. If this fails as well, the candidate with the greatest number of semesters of membership in CU Dems shall be the winner. If this fails, the winner will be chosen by random chance.
- b. Tie for highest number of votes between three or more candidates in an election where all other candidates have been eliminated. In this situation, the eliminated candidate shall be the one ranked #1 the fewest times on all ballots. If this also results in a tie between candidates, the one ranked #1+#2 the fewest times will be eliminated, and so on. This may continue until all the ranks are exhausted. If this method fails to yield an elimination, the eliminated candidate will be decided, from among the slate of candidates remaining after the above rounds have been exhausted, by a secret instant run-off vote of the Executive Board. If this fails as well, the candidate with the least number of semesters of membership in CU Dems shall be eliminated. If this fails, the eliminated candidate will be chosen by random chance.
- c. Tie for least number of votes between candidates in a round of instant-runoff, in an election with more than two candidates for one position. The rules governing Scenario II (above) shall apply here.



**Section 7. Webmaster Application.** The Executive Board may appoint a Webmaster following the spring elections and prior the end of the school year. If they do so, the Executive Board shall publicly disseminate an application for the office of Webmaster.

Executive board members have the ability to create committees and appoint body members to assist with the fulfillment of their duties. Examples include, but are not limited, to, events committee and social media committee. The executive board member who created the committee shall serve as committee chair and have full control over selection of committee members, who shall be drawn from the general body via an application process. Appointed committee members will not be voting board members, nor will they be required to attend regular board meetings. The committee chair may dissolve the committee at any point.

**Section 8. First-Year Representative Elections.** First-Year Representative Elections will adhere to the procedure for the spring elections except as noted here.

**Paragraph 1. Administration.** The election will be run by the previous First-Year Representative with the advice and support of the Board. If the previous Representative declines, the election will be run by the current Board.

**Paragraph 2. Informational Meeting.** There shall be a CU Dems informational meeting for first-year students before the elections, at which time the role of the position and eligibility requirements shall be discussed and a short application shall be handed out to any person wishing to run for Freshman Representative. Names and contact information of potential candidates shall be collected at the informational meeting, as well as at any other CU Dems event prior to the application deadline. The date of the informational meeting will be determined by the Board member(s) running the election. In the time between the informational meeting and the elections, Executive Board members are encouraged to approach interested candidates and discuss the roles of the position.

**Paragraph 3. Candidate Eligibility.** Only first-year students are eligible to run for the Freshman Representative position. Any candidate who wishes to be eligible to run in the election must have attended one CU Dems event and also either attended the informational meeting or have spoken with the Board member(s) running the election about the position and why they were unable to attend the informational meeting. These requirements must be publicized prior to the informational meeting at any CU Dems events and via email. The candidate must have also submitted the application to the Executive Board at a specified time before the elections. The Executive Board will determine the due date of the applications.

**Paragraph 4. Voter Eligibility.** Any undergraduate student who has attended one (1) CU Dems event in the semester of the election shall be eligible to vote.

**Section 9. Fall Leads Elections.** The Fall Lead Activists Election will adhere to the procedures for the spring elections except as noted here.

**Paragraph 1. Administration.** The elections will be run by the outgoing Lead Activists with the advice and support of the current Executive Board.

**Paragraph 2. Eligibility.** Any CU Dems member who has attended 3 CU Dems events in the fall semester or who went on the fall campaign trip will be eligible to vote

**Paragraph 3. Voting.** Voting. The Fall Lead Elections will use the instant runoff system outlined in Article III, Section 6 except both Lead Activists will be elected simultaneously. After one Candidate achieves a majority counting begins de novo with the votes of the elected candidate distributed to their next highest preference. If no candidate achieves a majority, the candidate with the most votes at the conclusion of the instant runoff is elected, and counting begins de novo with the votes of the elected candidate distributed to

their next highest preference. If two candidates tie in the first round after all other candidates have been eliminated, the rules in Article III, Section 6, Paragraph 8 shall be followed to break the tie, and counting begins de novo with the votes of the elected candidate distributed to their next highest preference. All other ties shall also be governed by the rules in Article III, Section 6, Paragraph 8. The order the Leads were elected in will not be announced

**Section 10. Study Abroad.** No person can run for a position if she/he intends to study abroad during the term of that position.

Candidates who are currently studying abroad may run for Board while abroad as long as she/he will be back at Columbia by the time his/her term begins. Candidates will Skype into the elections and be available to read his/her speech and answer questions. If this situation is not feasible due to the time difference, technological limitations, or an inexcusable commitment on the side of the candidate (ex. having class), candidates will submit a video of her/him reading her/his speech to YouTube to be shown during elections. If this is not a viable option, candidates will submit their speech in writing to be read by a member of the Council of Elders at elections.

**Section 11. Eligibility Amendments.** Amendments to this constitution that change the eligibility requirement to vote in an election shall not take effect until the following academic year.

#### **Article IV. Amendments and Ratification**

**Section 1. Amendments.** An Amendment to this Constitution may be proposed by a group of any three Executive Board members or any five General Body members. Proposed Amendments must have specific language. Proposed Amendments shall be put to the Executive Board and the General Body and must be passed by a two-thirds majority of both groups. An amendment decision by the Executive Board can be overturned by a three-quarters vote of the General Body.

**Section 2. Ratification.** This document must be ratified by two-thirds of the Executive Board and two thirds of the General Body.

**Section 3. Constitutional Review.** The Executive Board will review the constitution at least once every academic year.

**Section 4. Documentation.** The Constitution will be made available online.

#### **Article V. Constitutional Convention**

**Section 1. Calling a Constitutional Convention.** There may come a time where drastic changes to the CU Dems' constitution need to be made, beyond the procedure already outlined in Article IV, Sections 1 and 2. In the event of this, members of the Executive Board or General Body may elect to call a constitutional convention. For a constitutional convention to be called, a motion must be presented by either four (4) E-Board members or five (5) G-Body members. For planning purposes, this motion must be called on the second-to-last or last E-Board meetings of Fall semester or during the first two E-Board Meetings of Spring semester. A motion to call for constitutional convention cannot be rejected by E-Board and must be presented to the General Body at the preceding General Body meeting. The motion requires two-thirds majority support by the General Body for it to be approved.

**Section 2. Constitutional Committee.** If the motion to call a constitutional convention is approved, General Body will convene a constitutional committee. The committee will be comprised of four (4) E-Board members, four (4) general body members, and a non-voting Chair. Members of the committee and the chair shall be appointed by General Body within the first three General Body meetings of spring semester. The appointment process will be as follows: a candidate must have the support of at least 2 general body members to be nominated as a candidate. Once nominated candidates must either accept or reject their nomination. After that candidates will have the opportunity

to give a 2-minute speech in support of their candidacy. Then General Body shall hold a vote to appoint each member of the committee in the following order: the four general body members, the four executive board members, and then the chair.

**Section 3. Committee Chair.** The Committee Chair will be the chief liaison between the committee, Executive Board, and General Body. They will chair and coordinate each committee meeting throughout spring semester. The Chair shall present to General Body the progress of the committee at least once in February and once in March. The chair will have no voting power in committee decisions, except those allowed in Article V, Section 6. Eligible candidates for committee chair must be in their senior year and must have previously held a position on the Executive Board. If General Body is unable to appoint an eligible candidate as chair, the duties of the chair will be carried out by the current Secretary.

**Section 4. Committee Operations.** The constitutional committee must meet at least once a week during the spring semester at a time that does not conflict with Executive Board, General Body, or First Year Council meetings. The committee shall have full discretion during the drafting process, so long as the draft constitution is within guidelines outlined in Article V, Section 4, Subsection 1. Subsection 1. Limitations to Constitutional Committee Action. To ensure the stable operation of CU Dems, the constitution drafted by the committee must account for the following:

- (1) Governing Board constitutional drafting guidelines, which include:
  - a. Four core executive board positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer
  - b. An outline of duties for these E-Board members and any additional E-Board members
  - c. A clearly defined mission statement and statement of purpose
  - d. A definition and guidelines for what it means to be a member of the CU Dems General Body
  - e. Procedures for the election and removal of E-Board members
  - f. Procedures for the amendment process
- (2) The ability of E-Board members to finish their terms, as outlined in the current constitution
- (3) Procedures for calling a constitutional convention

**Section 5. Committee Voting Procedure and Draft Approval Procedure.** Throughout the drafting process, the committee must hold votes as they finalize language of each Article. For final language to be adopted, the committee must provide three-fourths majority support. Once the entire constitution is drafted, the draft must receive unanimous committee support before it can be presented to General Body for edits. The committee must provide the General Body with a draft of the constitution no later than the end of the first full week of April.

**Section 6. Editing Procedure.** The committee shall hold at least one editing meeting after the draft constitution is released for general body members to propose changes. All changes proposed will be adopted into the draft constitution unless the committee rejects them. Any vote to reject edits must be a unanimous vote or with three fourths majority support along with the approval of the chair.

**Section 7. Final Approval Procedure.** After the editing meeting(s), the committee must vote to approve the finalized constitution so that it can be presented for ratification. The committee must provide final approval with a unanimous vote. Final approval must be given no later than 48 hours prior to the second last general body meeting of the spring semester.

**Section 8. Ratification.** The final draft of the constitution will be presented to General Body at the second-to-last general body meeting of spring semester. Ratification requires two-thirds vote by General body to be approved. Members of the constitutional committee shall be ineligible to vote regarding ratification. If the constitution is ratified, it shall take effect immediately

## **Appendix A. Voter Registration Form.**

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DEMOCRATS**  
**Voter Registration Form for Executive Board Elections**

**DUE** [insert date here].

Please email form to [insert email address here].

You must complete this form to be eligible to vote if you are not on our attendance list!

**NAME:**

**SCHOOL AND YEAR:**

**EMAIL:**

**PHONE:**

1. What Columbia Democrats event(s) have you attended and participated in? Please describe in as much detail as possible.

2. If you have not attended a Columbia Democrats event this year and are interested in voting, please write a detailed paragraph outlining why you did not participate this year and telling us how we can improve our organization next year.

## **Appendix B. Community Standards Agreement**

Updated as of April 2017:

As a member of the Columbia University Democrats, I agree to create a space that fosters a respectful and open community and that generates camaraderie based on our shared values as Democrats.

I am committed to making Dems a comfortable and inclusive environment for everyone. I agree to create and maintain a healthy and safe environment at social gatherings hosted by CU Dems. I agree to care for friends and community members. I understand that there are others within the Dems community, including members of the executive board, that I can rely on and go to for help. I will hold myself accountable for any and all of my actions at social gatherings hosted by CU Dems.

Columbia University Democrats has a zero-tolerance policy for any instances of discrimination, harassment, or sexual assault or violence. I will not condone or commit any of the aforementioned actions. If I observe the aforementioned actions, I agree to intervene to the best of my ability, and if I cannot intervene, I will reach out to someone who can. I understand that the executive board is made up of members who are committed to hearing and responding to any concerns or issues I address with them.

The executive board is obligated to keep the best interests of the Dems community at the forefront of all political and social gatherings. The executive board is made up of members who can be seen as confidential and reliable, and who can provide me with assistance, or resources for assistance, when necessary. A primary goal of the Dems executive board is to maintain a strong balance between keeping our community safe and having fun

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read, understand, and agree to abide by the above standards and expectations.