

CONSTITUTION OF THE COLUMBIA CLIMATE GRADUATE COUNCIL AT THE COLUMBIA CLIMATE SCHOOL, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Table of Contents

Article I. Purpose
Section I. Preamble.
Section II. Purpose.
Section III. Powers.

Article II. Name and Duration
Section I. Name.
Section II. Duration.

Article III. Membership
Section I. Council Composition.
Section II. Future Expansion.
Section III. Elections, Vacancies, and Impeachment of CRs.

Article IV. Executive Board
Section I. Executive Board Composition and Quorum.
Section II. Executive Board Powers and Duties.

- A [President]
- B [Vice President of Internal Affairs]
- C [Vice President of External Affairs]
- D [Vice President of Finance]
- E [Vice President of Climate and Equity]

Section III. Removal and Vacancies of Executive Board Members.
Section IV. Procedures for Executive Board Elections.

Article V. Committees
Section I. Committee Composition.

Article VI. Voting
Section I. Voting Rules and Procedures.

Article VII. Meetings
Section I. Regular Meetings.
Section II. Special Meetings.
Section III. Emergency Meetings.
Section IV. Prohibited Scheduling for Meetings.
Section V. Open vs. Closed Session Meetings.
Section VI. Effective Dates of Resolutions and Bylaws.

Article VIII. CCGC Representation to External Groups
Section I. External Groups Partnership.
Section II. External Group Representatives.

Article IX. Usage of CCGC Funds
Section I. Funding Terms and Conditions

Article X. Ratification and Amendment
Section I. Terms and Conditions on Constitutional Expansion.

Article I. Purpose

I. Preamble

1. In order to improve and support the administrative development of the Columbia Climate School, we, the graduate students of the Columbia Climate School, believing that student life is best served through dialogue, advocacy, and solidarity, therefore do establish the Columbia Climate Graduate Council. We hereby ordain and establish this Constitution of the Columbia Climate Graduate Council (hereafter, "Our Constitution")

II. Purpose

1. The CCGC is tasked with the responsibility of:
    a. To represent and be an advocate for the graduate student body of the Columbia Climate School ("CCS") to the Climate School administration and Columbia University in the active pursuit of issues relevant to the graduate students, including, but not limited to, financial aid, health care, housing, & social activities.
    b. To provide a structure for graduate students to work to achieve collective progress and development.
    c. To create and maintain ongoing dialogue with the Deans of CCS and staff of the Dean's offices.
    d. To serve as a channel for communication between the graduate students and other individuals and groups external to the CCS graduate student body, including, but not limited to, the Deans of CCS, staff of the Dean's office, affiliated faculty members, other university officers and administrators, university committees, CCS alumni and alumni organizations, the Graduate Student Union, and the University Senate.
    e. To build and strengthen the community of graduate students in CCS.
    f. To foster cultural diversity and an improved quality of life through cultural initiates to improve the quality of life of all CCS students.
    g. To appropriate allocated funds of CCS students-activities fees.
    h. To maintain communication with alumni, alumni organizations, and career services to help CCS graduate students in their professional development.

III. Powers.

1. CCGC shall have any authority necessary to carry out its enumerated purposes in consistency with the rules and procedures of the Columbia Climate School set forth by the Climate School Administration. The Columbia Climate Graduate Council shall have the expressed and sole authority to establish relevant fees and appropriate all the funds thereby generated.

Article II. Name and Duration

I. Name

1. The name of this organization shall be the Columbia Climate Graduate Council ("CCGC") and shall consist of MA and PhD graduate students enrolled in the Climate School at Columbia University. For the purposes of this constitution, these students shall be known as the "graduate students."

II. Duration

1. CCGC plans to be established as a permanent organization, dependent on the longevity and future endeavors of the Columbia Climate School

Article III. Membership

I. Council Composition

1. CCGC shall be composed of 5 officers on the Executive Board, at least one student representative from each Climate School graduate program. The Climate School graduate programs are in accordance to Appendix I. Student representatives to graduate programs shall be known as the Council Representatives ("CRs").
2. CRs must be currently registered in the department that they are to represent, and every such student is eligible for election and service as a student representative.
3. CCGC CRs are elected and seated based on the rules outlined in Article III, Section III.
4. Failure of CRs to meet the tasks outlined in Article III of the Bylaws will result in an inactive status of bad standing on behalf of their respective department.

II. Future Expansion

1. Due to the recent establishment of the Columbia Climate School in 2021, the Climate & Society program is the only Climate School program at the time this Constitution was established, therefore Climate and Society shall have 100% student representation in the council. The distribution of CRs will be as follows in anticipation of the Columbia Climate School's future expansion:
    a. 1 program: 6 CRs (11 member council, quorum at 7)
    b. 2 programs: 4 CRs each (12 member council, quorum at 7)
    c. 3 programs: 3 CRs each (14 member council, quorum at 8)
    d. 4 programs: 3 CRs each (17 member council, quorum at 10)
2. This future expansion roadmap is intended as a recommendation to the future of the Council, it is in the best interest of the CCGC to revise the expansion whenever possible for the potential events of new executive board member positions and other events that will affect the composition of the Council.

III. Elections, Vacancies, and Impeachment of CRs

1. CCGC prefers that council representatives serve for a full academic year-long term that new representatives attend the first meeting of the academic year.
2. Outgoing council representatives are encouraged to attend the first meeting after the transition occurs to ensure consistency, if available.
3. Council Representatives can be selected by any of two methods, outlined below:
    a. Direct election by all graduate students within a department (who are in good standing as defined by the Columbia Climate School).
        i. An open nomination period must occur such that all students eligible to run have the opportunity to nominate themselves.
        ii. The announcement for the election should occur at least one week prior to balloting.
        iii. Balloting should be conducted in such a way that there is no hardship for voting.
    b. Appointment by the department's graduate student government/organization.
        i. A department-wide announcement should occur prior to the selection period with a pre-determined deadline.
        ii. Nominations should be open such that all students of the department are eligible for the appointment list.
        iii. Candidates must announce their intent to become a council representative through a department-wide communication (poster, email,

etc.) following a meeting with Climate School Administration and the CCGC President.

iv. Candidates must obtain the signatures and UNIs of >10% of the graduate students of their department who support the person's nomination as council representative.

v. If multiple candidates meet the requirements of obtaining >10% of the graduate students of their department supporting their nomination before the deadline, then an election will ensue following the procedures outlined above in 'Direct Election'.

4. Only Columbia Climate School graduate students who will be registered for the entire officer term shall be considered for a Council Representative seat.

5. If a CR becomes an executive officer, their CR membership shall become vacant except if they are elected as an interim officer.

6. For vacancies in other offices of the Executive Board, the President shall appoint a CR or a Climate School student with the consent of the Council as interim officer until an election may be held. CCGC shall follow the election procedure as detailed in Article IV, Section IV.

7. Members may be impeached and removed from office for unethical behavior, failure to adhere to the regulations of the Council, not fulfilling the responsibilities of their role, or by accumulating more than two (2) unexcused absences.

8. Any Executive Board Member, CR, and representative to an external group, may motion to impeach. Graduate students may contact the CCGC Executive Board to initiate CR impeachment proceedings.

9. Motions to impeach must be announced before the upcoming CCGC plenary meeting and included in the written agenda distributed at the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.

10. Any CR may be removed from their role by a two-thirds (⅔) majority vote of those CCGC members eligible to vote and in attendance at the meeting, at which the vote is taken.

11. Any Representative to an External Group, minus the University Senator, may be removed from their role by a simple majority vote of those CCGC members eligible to vote and in attendance at the meeting, at which the vote is taken.

12. Removal of the Climate School University Student Senator

a. The University Student Senator of the Columbia Climate School may be removed from their role via the Council through the following actions:
    i. Any Executive Board Member or Council Representative may bring forth a Motion of Impeachment of the University Senator at least a week prior to the next CCGC Plenary Meeting at which the vote shall be taken.
    ii. Registered Graduate Students of the Columbia Climate School will be notified of the Motion of Impeachment at least a week prior to the next CCGC Plenary Meeting and will be invited to attend the Meeting for public comment.
    iii. The meeting will be held in both open and closed sessions, where the closed sessions will be the eligible voting members of the CCGC to vote on the Motion of Impeachment of the Climate School University Student Senator.
    iv. A ⅔ majority vote will be required to Impeach the University Student Senator, at which the vote shall be taken and where ⅘ of the Council is in attendance.
    v. If passed, the CCGC will notify the Climate School Administration and University Senate of the Motion to Impeach the University Student Senator passed by the ⅔ majority of the Council.
    vi. An open election will be held following the impeachment of the University Student Senator, who will not be eligible for re-election, with the registered Graduate Student Body of the Columbia Climate School.

Article IV. The Executive Board

I. Executive Board Composition and Quorum

1. The Executive Board shall consist of one President and four Vice-Presidents, therefore as follows:
    1. President
    2. Vice President (Internal Affairs)
    3. Vice President (External Affairs)
    4. Vice President (Finance)
    5. Vice President (Climate and Equity)

2. The above officers shall constitute the Executive Board. They shall have all the duties and powers designated and any further ones as delegated by the Council, so long as not in contravention to this Constitution and Bylaws. The President or any two officers may call a meeting of the Board, but at least three officers must be present in order to conduct business.

3. No individual on the Executive Board shall hold more than one office related to the CCGC.

4. Executive Board meetings involve only the officers and occur once per month following the beginning of their term.

II. Executive Board Powers and Duties

1. The powers and duties of the Executive Board shall be as follows:

A. [President]
The President shall serve as the chief executive officer of the Council. They shall be responsible for the execution of this Constitution and all resolutions made from the Council, represent the Council at official functions, serve as one of the primary student liaisons along with the Vice President of Internal Affairs to the Climate School Administration, and further the purposes of Article I, Section II of the Constitution. In addition, they shall preside over Council and Executive Board meetings, prepare and distribute the agenda for Council meetings, and call meetings of the Executive Board and Emergency Meetings of the Council.

B. [Vice President of Internal Affairs]
The Vice President of Internal Affairs shall preside over the Council and Executive Board in the absence of the President. They shall be tasked with serving as one of the primary student liaisons along with the President to the Climate School Administration. They are also responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the Constitution and Bylaws of the CCGC, assist in event planning with the Vice President of Student Life, and coordinate the meeting spaces of the Council. They shall keep minutes of all Council meetings and post conspicuously a copy of the same onto the website as soon as approved by the rest of the Executive Board.

C. [Vice President of External Affairs]
The Vice President of External Affairs shall preside over the Council and Executive Board in the absence of the President and Vice President of Internal Affairs. They shall be responsible for communicating with external groups that the Council is affiliated with and will be tasked with appointing external representatives on behalf of the CCGC. shall be in charge with the creation and maintenance of the social media accounts and website of the Council. The Vice President of External Affairs shall be in charge in coordinating with Climate School Administration in adding updates to the school's weekly newsletter once every two weeks along with the President. The Vice President of External Affairs is the primary liaison on elections of Council Representatives and The University Senator from the Columbia Climate School as outlined in Article IV of the Bylaws.

D. [Vice President of Finance]
The Vice President of Finance shall be the chief fiscal officer of the Council. They shall be in charge of all funds of the Council, however generated, and collect and distribute such funds only as authorized by vote of the Council or Executive Board. They shall keep complete records of all financial transactions according to standard accounting principles and shall make regular financial reports to the Council, which shall be in writing, at least once per semester. They shall preside over the Finance Committee as Chair. After officer elections, the incoming and outgoing VP of Finance Chairs, with the advice of the outgoing Finance Committee, shall create the standard budget allocation and appeal forms for the upcoming academic year, and establish procedures for the Finance Committee in accordance with the guidelines found within the Bylaws.

E. [Vice President of Climate and Equity]
The Vice President shall be responsible for the ensured commitment from the Council and Executive Board to uphold the values of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accountability within its spaces. This includes bridging the gap of Climate Change to IDEA values by advocating for environmental justice and equitable inclusion of voices within the Columbia Climate School. They shall preside over the Climate and Equity Committee as Chair and are tasked with updating Climate School Administration on any positions the Council takes on issues related to IDEA topics. The Vice President of Climate and Equity shall be tasked with the creation of the annual Climate Student Feedback Report to be dispersed among all graduate students and inform the Council, Climate School Administration, and relevant external stakeholders of the results and feedback from graduate students. The Vice President of Climate and Equity shall additionally be tasked with notifying Climate School affiliated graduate students of upcoming events and opportunities related to Climate Justice at Columbia University.

III. Removal and Vacancies of Executive Board Members

1. Executive Board Members may be removed from office for any reason by two-thirds (⅔) of members present at a Special Meeting called for such purpose and at which a quorum exists. Removal will happen effective immediately once the written resolution has been passed.
2. Council Members shall be notified of the removal resolution at least one week in advance.
3. Motions for removal may be introduced only by written resolution stating the reasons for removal and signed by at least half (½) of the Graduate Council.
4. In the event of a vacancy in any of the offices, with the exception of the Presidency, a successor shall be elected from the Council as soon as possible.

a. The line of succession of the Executive Board to the Presidency shall be in order to the list under Article IV.I.1.
b. The VP succeeding the President will decide to either hold an election for the Presidency or forebode their previous Vice Presidency in order to become acting President with the consent of two-thirds (⅔) of the Council.
    i. If the Council fails to recognize the successor as President, then an election lead by CCS University Student Senator shall take place.
    ii. If the Council fails to recognize the successor as President, the successor shall keep and return to their original VP position.

IV. Procedures for Executive Board Elections

1. The Executive Board's term shall begin following the Fall elections in the month of October. The new cohorts affiliated with the Columbia Climate School will be notified by Administration of a call for candidates.
    a. Following the call for candidates, a vetting process will occur to determine a candidate's eligibility to run by Administration.
    b. A two week campaign period will begin once the vetting process is complete.
    c. Voting will take place following the campaign period and will last for a week.
    d. Results will be announced within three business days of the elections closing.
2. Executive Board Members of the previous academic year will become ex-officio Executive Board Members following the graduation of their respective program and until the new Board is elected in October.
3. Only graduate students with registration to the Columbia Climate School are eligible to be elected to the Executive Board.

Article V. Committees

I. Committee Composition

1. All CRs are required to serve on at least one committee unless they are appointed to serve as an external group representative as mentioned in Article VIII, Section II.
2. Standing committees include: Finance Committee and the Climate and Equity Committee. Committee Membership shall be open to all interested students registered in the Columbia Climate School.
3. An indefinite number of *ad hoc* committees may be created as desired by the CCGC and will be open to all interested students registered in the Columbia Climate School.
4. The particulars of a proposed *ad hoc* committee shall be specified prior to constituting such a committee, in accordance to the Bylaws, Article II, Section V.

Article VI. Voting

I. Voting Rules and Procedures

1. Each active CCGC Representative (Executive Board and CRs) is entitled to one vote.

2. Should a CR be unable to attend a meeting, that representative may send a proxy from the same department who shall enjoy full privileges, including the right to vote. Executive Board members are barred from sending proxies to meetings.

3. A simple majority shall constitute the right to pass resolutions except for amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws.

4. Voting for changes to the Constitution and Bylaws should pass a ⅔ vote with quorum of the Council present.

5. The President shall hold the discretion to end any and all debate on a resolution and shall initiate voting procedures following Robert's Rules of Order.

6. In the event of a tie, there shall be a revote after further deliberation. If there is another tie, then the University Student Senator shall be given voting status and provide their vote immediately. The Council will then move forward reflecting the results of the tie-breaker.

   a. If the University Student Senator is absent to break the tie, the resolution shall be tabled until the next meeting or until the University Student Senator is present to provide their vote.

Article VII. Meetings

I. Regular Meetings

1. CCGC shall hold monthly meetings in the Fall and Spring semester consisting of members defined in Article III, Section I.

2. Regular CCGC meetings are open to all Columbia Climate School graduate students.

3. The schedule of general CCGC plenary meetings shall be determined by the Executive Board during summer and winter breaks and announced by the second Monday of the respective semester.

4. Once quorum, as outlined in Article III, Section II, is determined, the presiding Executive Board, namely the President, calls the meeting to begin.

5. All meetings shall be conducted using Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise decided by the attendees of the meeting (by ⅔ majority vote). The Executive Board shall be tasked with educating and informing members of the procedure for Robert's Rules of Order with training from the Climate School Administration.

6. The Executive Board shall meet as often as necessary for board meetings, but not less than once each month, as outlined in Article IV.I.4.

7. All standing committees and *ad hoc* committees shall meet as often as necessary, but not less than once each month during the Fall and Spring semesters for the purposes specified when they were created as outlined in Article V, Section I.

II. Special Meetings

1. A Special Meeting of the Council shall be called to discuss issues that need specific attention. Such issues include, but are not limited to, Constitutional and Bylaw amendments, impeachments or vacancies, and budget allocations. A Special Meeting may be called by either the President, any two (2) members of the Executive Board, or a simple majority of the Council. Notice of the meeting shall be sent to each Representative's e-mail or their equivalent, at least four days in advance. Other business may be discussed at a Special Meeting, but the special business must be addressed and concluded first.

III. Emergency Meetings

1. An Emergency Meeting of the Council shall be called to deal with urgent issues that require immediate attention. An Emergency Meeting may be called by either the President, any two (2) members of the Executive Board, or the quorum requirement of the Council. The meeting shall be preceded by as much notice as possible, and in the event that the meeting is called, such notice shall not be less than twenty-four (24) hours. Notice may be given by phone, e-mail or in person, and a recorded attempt must be made to notify each Representative. Quorum will not be required at Emergency Meetings, however, the business of the meeting must be shared with the rest of the CCGC within 24 hours of its adjournment otherwise the business shall be put under external review and potential repeal.

IV. Prohibited Scheduling for Meetings

1. No Regular or Special Meetings shall be convened on weekends, holidays, or during vacation periods. No Emergency Meetings shall be convened on holidays or during vacation periods, but are allowed for weekends if the majority of the Council planning to attend agree to the meeting date.

V. Open vs. Closed Session Meetings

1. All meetings of the Council, except emergency meetings, shall require a quorum of the Council in order to conduct business, pass Resolutions or approve changes to the Constitution or Bylaws. The constituency of the Climate School may attend Council Meetings but cannot participate in voting. A meeting may be closed by a two-thirds (⅔) vote of the Council or a four-fifths (⅘) vote of the Executive Board.

VI. Effective Dates of Resolutions and Amendmentss.

1. Resolutions and Bylaws shall take effect upon passage unless a later time is specified. Resolutions and Bylaws shall remain in effect until repealed or amended.

Article VIII. CCGC Representation to External Groups

I. External Groups Partnership

1. Should any external group request a representative of the Climate School's graduate student body, the executive board shall discuss this request and shall decide whether to provide representation to the group in question. The Vice President of External Affairs will inform the CCGC about their actions at the following CCGC meeting.

II. External Group Representatives

1. CCGC's representatives to external groups shall attempt to serve as voice for the full graduate student body of the Columbia Climate School, however the opinions they express to external groups are not official CCGC policy unless voted on by the Executive Board or the CCGC.
2. Any Columbia Climate School graduate student is eligible to serve as a representative to any external group, even if they are not a council representative, they are considered non-voting CCGC members, but are required to fulfill all duties of a council representative.

Article IX. Usage of CCGC Funds

I. Funding Terms and Conditions

1. CCGC shall have the right to receive allotted funds from the Columbia Climate School and the University including, but not limited to, Student Activity fees.

2. CCGC may, with the consent of the Climate School Administration, introduce concessions or hold events for the graduate students in order to generate revenue. CCGC reserves the right to sell, rent, subcontract, or franchise the proceeds and/or management of such revenue-producing operations.

3. Any event funded in whole or in part by the proceeds of Climate School student activities fees must be open to all Climate School students.

4. The allocation of funds from Climate School student activities fees is subject to the approval of the Deans of the Columbia Climate School. CCGC recognizes the power of the Deans to veto such allocations, because of the Deans responsibility to assure that the events and activities funded by CCGC out of the proceeds of the student activities fees are legal, do not damage the tax-exempt status of the university, and/or do not contravene any written university policy. Whenever an allocation has been vetoed, the Deans, or designated Dean tasked on working with the CCGC, shall issue to the CCGC a written explanation of the basis of the action.

Article X. Ratification and Amendment

I. Terms and Conditions on Constitutional Expansion

1. The Constitution and any amendment may be proposed by: Either the graduate student body of the Columbia Climate School or the Columbia Climate Graduate Council can propose changes to this constitution in the form of amendments.
    a. The amendment to the Constitution must be approved by a simple majority of the voting graduate student body of the Columbia Climate School, with at least a 15% voter turnout of the body.
2. This Constitution takes effect as of [TBA] after it had been ratified by a two-thirds (⅔) majority vote by the registered graduate student constituency of the Columbia Climate School, and subsequently accepted by the Deans of the Columbia Climate School.

Appendix I.

Recognized Constituent Departments

CCGC represents PhD graduate students in the following departments of instruction: 0

CCGC represents Masters graduate students in the following departments of instruction: 1

a. Climate & Society