

JEWISH STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
CONSTITUTION

Current March 2014

I. Mission Statement

We, the Jewish students of Johns Hopkins University, feel the need to identify as Jews and organize, so as to better address our common concerns and actualize our common aspirations. These aspirations and concerns are local, national and worldwide. They include the promotion of Jewish identity, a concern for and a desire to promote Israel as the Jewish state, peaceful democratic and secure, active realization of the values of *tzedaka* (charity), *chesed* (kindness), and *tikkun olam* (bettering the world through service), and the right of all individuals to live Jewish lives in ways that they see fit, in an open and accommodating environment.

II. The Constitution

- A. This constitution serves as the basic document of the Jewish Students Association (JSA).
- B. The constitution must meet the approval of the SAC (Student Activities Commission), or the equivalent successor institution.

III. Duties and Objectives

- A. The JSA shall seek a status of good standing, or equivalent status, with the SAC or with the equivalent successor institution.
- B. The JSA shall provide political, cultural, religious, and social programming, consistent with the needs of the entire Jewish community of Johns Hopkins University.
 - 1. The JSA will primarily be concerned with Johns Hopkins affiliates of the Homewood campus, but will engage with affiliates at other campuses as appropriate.
 - 2. The JSA will also engage with the local Jewish and general communities of the Homewood area, and Baltimore at large.
- C. The JSA shall act as the voice of, and advocate for, the concerns and interests of the Jewish students on the Homewood Campus.
- D. The JSA shall bring together students, staff, faculty, and other affiliates of all religious and ideological backgrounds, to:
 - 1. Promote unity and pride in a common Jewish heritage and community,
 - 2. Promote Jewish interests on campus,
 - 3. Assist and support Israel and world Jewry,
 - 4. Educate members of the JSA, Jewish campus community, and Johns Hopkins community on these issues,

5. Stimulate involvement among members of the Jewish campus community as well as the Johns Hopkins community at large.

IV. Membership

- A. Membership in the JSA is automatically conferred to all Johns Hopkins students, or former students who graduated during the current academic year, who attend at least three events or meetings sponsored by Hopkins Hillel or JSA pursuant to rules set out below in Article IX.
 1. Recurring events including, but not limited to, Shabbat meals and services may only be counted as one event.
 2. Participation in a Hopkins Hillel sanctioned trip, including, but not limited to, Taglit/Birthright or Alternative Break may count as one event, but may only be used once.
 3. Events solely sponsored by another SAC-approved group not under the JSA umbrella do not count, even if they utilize Hopkins Hillel's facility or resources.
 4. Voting qualifications shall be set out below in Article VI.
- B. For purposes of quorums, votes and petitions, the total membership shall be considered the number of votes cast in the last election plus 15 percent.

V. Leadership and Responsibilities

- A. The JSA will be governed by a student Board.
 1. The term of all JSA Board members is two academic semesters.
 2. Terms begin at the conclusion of the Spring Semester and end at the same time the following year.
- B. The JSA Board will consist of the following officers:
 1. The President will:
 - i. Provide overall vision and direction to the JSA Board, JSA membership and Jewish community of Johns Hopkins University.
 - ii. Act as the primary representative of the JSA Board, JSA membership and Jewish community.
 - iii. Preside over all JSA meetings.
 - iv. Supervise the activities and responsibilities of the Board.
 - v. Formally report to the General Board at the start of each semester with a vision for upcoming events, initiatives, and the state of the Jewish community, Johns Hopkins Hillel, and the JSA.
 - vi. Oversee budgetary matters in conjunction with the Treasurer.
 - vii. Act as an exceptionally responsible and active participant in the endeavors of the JSA.
 2. The Vice President will:
 - i. Preside over meetings and take executive responsibility in the President's absence.

- ii. Take primary responsibility for providing Board members with logistical, programmatic, and material support for JSA events.
 - iii. Assist Board members in recruiting, forming, and maintaining committees.
 - iv. Attend a meeting of each JSA committee at least once per semester.
 - v. In conjunction with the President, provide oversight and feedback to ensure that other board members and subsidiary groups fulfill their assigned responsibilities.
 - vi. Compile and distribute a monthly calendar.
 - vii. Take notes and keep record of minutes, including yearly agreed-upon policies and bylaws, from all Board meetings, making them publicly available to the membership.
 - viii. Compile and distribute relevant records to subsequent JSA Boards and Hillel staff.
 - ix. Coordinate and assist the JSA Board and its committees with publicity for all JSA events,
 - x. Act as a responsible and active participant in the endeavors of the JSA.
3. The Treasurer will:
- i. Be responsible for all financial activities of the JSA.
 - ii. Represent the JSA at meetings of the SAC or equivalent successor.
 - iii. Prepare, in conjunction with the incoming JSA Board, the annual budget for submission to the SAC or equivalent successor, as appropriate.
 - iv. Disburse funds with the coordination and approval of the JSA Board.
 - v. Take primary responsibility, in conjunction with the President, as the only authorized handlers and disbursers of JSA funds.
 - vi. Oversee and assist in the writing of grants.
 - vii. Formally report to the General Board on the state of JSA finances twice a semester.
 - viii. Act as a responsible and active participant in the endeavors of the JSA.
4. The Social Director will:
- i. Form and chair the Social Committee, composed of non-JSA Board members, to advise, plan and facilitate social programming.
 - ii. Coordinate and plan all JSA social events.
 - iii. Network and liaison with other campus social organizations for the planning of collaborative events.

- iv. Further ensure the continuation of pre-existing social programs, as appropriate.
 - v. Act as a responsible and active participant in the endeavors of the JSA.
5. The Jewish Life Director will:
- i. Form and chair the Jewish Life Committee, composed of non-JSA Board members, to advise, plan, and facilitate educational programming.
 - ii. Plan and facilitate Jewish religious activities for the benefit of all Jewish students on campus. While these activities are non-denominational in nature, they will be planned in consultation with the leaders of all denominational groups.
 - iii. Promote inclusive Jewish learning on campus.
 - iv. Engage the Jewish community in both interfaith and intrafaith programming and dialogue.
 - v. Appoint and oversee a delegate who will act as a liaison to the Interfaith Council (IFC) or equivalent successor.
 - vi. Appoint and oversee a delegate to ensure the creation and/or continuation of interfaith initiatives, as appropriate, particularly with the Muslim community.
 - vii. Plan and facilitate Shabbat and holiday meals. Coordinate, in conjunction with the following year's Jewish Life Director, Hillel Staff, and JSA Board, preparations for the following year's High Holidays.
 - viii. Act as a responsible and active participant in the endeavors of the JSA.
6. The Tzedek Director:
- i. Coordinate and publicize all community service events.
 - ii. Form and chair the Tzedek Committee, composed of non-JSA Board members, to advise, plan, and facilitate programming.
 - iii. Liaison with other community service organizations, for purposes of joint programming.
 - iv. Carry on long-term JSA chesed and tzedek projects and programs, as appropriate and applicable.
 - v. Act as a responsible and active participant in the endeavors of the JSA.
7. The First Year Students at Hillel (FYSH) Director will:
- i. Form and chair the FYSH Committee, composed of a majority of freshmen, to advise, plan, and facilitate programming directed towards, but not limited to, freshmen.

- ii. Take primary responsibility for Orientation Week events, in coordination with the outgoing FYSH Director, Hillel staff, and JSA Board.
 - iii. Act as a responsible and active participant in the endeavors of the JSA.
- C. The JSA Board will meet at least once every two weeks while the university is in session.
 - 1. JSA Board meetings are to be governed by bylaws.
 - i. The bylaws must be proposed and passed at the start of every Fall Semester.
 - ii. The bylaws will set rules of order, procedure, and voting for the operation of the JSA Board.
 - iii. Consensus will be a guiding principle of all JSA proceedings.
 - iv. A quorum will be defined as two-thirds of the JSA Board members.
 - 2. JSA Board Meetings are closed to the public, but will be faithfully reported in the minutes.
 - i. The President may invite guests.
 - ii. The JSA Board may overturn the President's invitation or make an invitation by simple majority.
 - 3. Each member of the JSA Board is expected to report on his/her activities and those of his/her respective committee.
 - i. Informal reports are expected weekly, covering past activities and plans for future programming.
 - ii. Each JSA Board member will keep formal records of planning and evaluation for each event that he or she facilitates.
 - 4. All board members are expected to attend all meetings.
 - i. Each JSA Board member is allowed up to three absences per semester.
- D. The JSA will hold at least three public general membership meetings per semester, with no more than one in any calendar month.
- E. Following elections, the JSA Board will assist the newly elected board in assuming their duties by explaining current activities and programming and turning over all relevant materials.

VI. Elections

- A. The Election Committee is the sole administrator JSA elections.
 - 1. Only students graduating at the conclusion of the Spring Semester may serve on the Election Committee.
 - 2. At the second JSA meeting of the Spring Semester, nominations will be taken for appointment of the Election Committee Chair.

3. At the third JSA Board meeting of the semester, the nominees for the Election Committee Chair will be announced and voted on.
 - i. A simple majority vote of the JSA Board is required for appointment.
 4. The committee must have at least two other members.
 - i. The chair is free to choose his/her committee, but must report his/her choices to the JSA Board.
 - ii. The committee is expected to carry out its duties in a timely and competent fashion.
 - iii. The Election Committee will report to the JSA Board regularly, but is independent and solely responsible for administration of JSA Elections.
 - iv. In the event that the JSA Board determines that the Election Committee has not fulfilled its duties in a timely, competent, and fair manner, the JSA Board may, by two-thirds majority, dismiss the current committee and choose a new Election Committee Chair, but may do so no later than two weeks after the conclusion of Spring Break as determined by the university.
 5. The above procedure is to be followed for the administration of all special elections.
- B. Any undergraduate student, or student who graduated during the current academic year, who has attended Johns Hopkins for at least one full semester and has attended three or more events, as defined in Article IV of this constitution, is eligible to vote, regardless of class standing.
1. The Election Committee is to elaborate this definition and verify all voters' eligibility to vote.
 2. The members of the Election Committee may not vote in JSA Board Elections, but may vote with the membership on constitutional matters.
- C. JSA Elections are to be held annually.
1. The nomination process must begin before Spring Break.
 2. The election process must be complete before the SAC budget request deadline, barring extenuating circumstances to be determined by the Election Committee.
 3. All election quorums are to be 50 percent of the total membership.
 4. Nominations may be made by any member of the JSA.
 5. The specific nominating procedure will be set by the Election Committee.
- D. Only members expecting to be present through the entire following year are eligible for nomination and election.
1. Students nominated to serve as president must have served at least one full semester on JSA Board.

2. Each position may be held by only one individual. Joint office holding is prohibited.
 3. No individual may hold more than one position on the JSA Board at a time.
- E. A candidate needs a majority of votes to win election. If there is no majority, a run-off election of the top two vote-getters will be held the following week.
- F. In the event of a JSA Board vacancy, the JSA Board must choose a replacement.
1. The President will accept nominations from the JSA Board for a replacement.
 2. Nominations will be open for one week.
 3. Nominees must be JSA members, as set out in Article IV above.
 4. A simple majority of the JSA Board is needed to appoint a replacement.
 - i. The replacement has full rights as a member of the JSA Board.
 5. A vacancy in the Board does not need to be filled in the second half of the Spring Semester.
 6. For a vacancy for the position of President, the Treasurer will be interim President until the JSA Board votes on a replacement.
 - i. The new President must be one of the current board members.
 - ii. Election of the new President must take place within one week of the vacancy.
 - iii. The now vacant JSA Board seat will be filled as per Article VI, Section (F).

VII. Impeachment and Removal

- A. Impeachment and removal are appropriate only in cases of disservice to the community, violation of the constitution, or criminal or unethical activity.
- B. Any active JSA member may propose to impeach any JSA Board member.
 1. On receipt of the request, a majority vote of the JSA Board is needed to impeach.
 2. The votes of the board members are to be recorded in the minutes.
 3. The board member in question is excluded from the vote.
 4. In the event of a tie vote, the proposal fails.
- C. If the proposal to impeach fails, a majority petition of the membership is sufficient to impeach a JSA Board member.
- D. If the proposal to impeach passes, the Vice-President will inform the JSA Board member of the charges pending within one day of the passage of impeachment.
 1. The JSA Board member will be given 48 hours to respond in writing.
 - i. The response will be distributed along with notice of the charges to the general membership.
- E. No more than two weeks following impeachment, an open JSA Board meeting must be held.

1. Following open debate, the JSA Board must vote on the removal of the JSA Board member in question.
 - i. The board member in question is excluded from the vote.
 - ii. The votes of the JSA Board members are to be recorded in the minutes.
 - iii. In the event of a tie vote, the vote is repeated until a majority is reached.
 - iv. Removal takes effect immediately.
2. If the proposal to remove fails, a majority petition of the membership is sufficient to remove a JSA Board member.

VIII. Hillel

- A. The JSA Board will serve, intact, as the Student Board of the Johns Hopkins Hillel.
- B. JSA and Hillel will collaborate to provide programming and direction to the Jewish community of Johns Hopkins.
- C. The membership and leadership of the JSA retain the exclusive right to set policy for the community.
- D. Hillel professionals serve as advisors to the JSA Board.
 1. Hillel professionals may request specific agenda items at any time.
 2. Hillel professionals and the JSA are to maintain a close relationship regarding programming and the Johns Hopkins Jewish community at large.

IX. Amendments

- A. All JSA members may propose amendments to the constitution to the JSA Board.
- B. The JSA Board must consider and vote on the proposed amendment in a timely manner.
 1. A simple majority is needed to present the amendment to the membership.
 - i. In the Spring Semester, the Board may choose to present the amendment with JSA elections, or call a special election.
 - ii. In the Fall Semester, a special election must be called.
 - iii. Standard election rules will apply in either the Fall or Spring.
 2. If the JSA Board chooses not to present the proposed amendment to the membership, a petition signed by one-third of the voting membership will be sufficient to call for a general membership vote.
 - i. Standard election rules will apply
- C. All amendments are subject to the approval of the SAC Executive Board or equivalent successor.

X. Adoption

- A. This constitution will be adopted by the JSA when it meets the requirements set forth for constitutional amendments in the Jewish Students Association of Johns Hopkins University Constitution.
- B. This constitution is subject to the approval of the SAC Executive Board or equivalent successor.
- C. This constitution will take effect immediately following the election, and will be binding for the newly elected 2013-2014 JSA Board.