

Penn State Lion Caucus Constitution

Date of origin: April 2018

I. Purpose

The purpose of Lion Caucus shall be:

- A. To promote the Pennsylvania State University, its official positions and the interests of its students, to elected officials on the local, state, and federal levels of government.
- B. To educate government officials on the positive influences the Pennsylvania State University has on students and residents of the Commonwealth.
- C. To inform the student body of federal, state and local policies and proposals impacting the University and to promote advocacy.
- D. To provide students with meaningful leadership experiences, meeting and interacting with government and elected officials.

II. Standard of Conduct

- A. Each member of the group has made a commitment of themselves to serve Penn State as a member of the Lion Caucus. It is therefore expected that each member uphold a professional standard of conduct as a representative of the University. These standards include, but are not limited to, the following:
 1. Each member of the Lion Caucus shall exercise proper etiquette when attending official university functions.
 2. All members shall be punctual, dressed appropriately and act in a professional manner when attending said events.
 3. All members shall be prohibited from drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking prior to and while attending any said functions.
- B. Each Lion Caucus member shall have a responsibility to contribute to the overall positive morale of the group through attendance at social functions, considerate and polite concern for other members and through maintaining professional conduct while dealing with issues and concerns of the group.

III. Membership

- A. At all times, the majority (50%+1) of all active members shall be full-time, officially registered Undergraduate students at University Park.
- B. The Undergraduate organization shall have at least 10 active members at all times.
- C. Types of Membership:
 1. Active Members – Current student of the university who maintains eligibility for membership. Only active members shall have the privilege to vote on questions before the membership.
 2. Honorary Members – Any supporter of the university, who currently holds an elected office within local, state, or the federal government, may be nominated and elected by active members to honorary membership.
- D. Eligibility for Membership:
 1. Any full time student with a grade point average of at least 2.5 (undergraduate) or 3.0 (graduate), who will be enrolled at the University Park campus of the Pennsylvania State University for at least two semesters thereafter may apply for an interview for membership.
 2. Eligibility is dependent upon academic good standing as defined by university rules and regulations and the parallel rules set forth by this constitution.

E. Membership Recruitment and Selection:

1. The Lion Caucus abides by the university's non-discrimination policy in all membership appointments and issues.
2. New members may be recruited during the first four weeks of the fall and spring semester of the academic year.
3. Prospective members will be required to submit an application to the Executive Board.
4. The Executive Board shall review all applications.
5. The Executive Board shall interview all qualified candidates beginning one week after the application deadline.
6. Active Lion Caucus appointments shall be made by recommendation of the Executive Board with final approval by the Vice President for Government and Community Relations of the Pennsylvania State University.
7. Upon approval of new members, all new members will be notified of admission to the Lion Caucus within a timely manner, and all applicants not accepted shall be notified.
8. Honorary members shall be selected by a three-fourths vote of all active Lion Caucus members.

F. New Membership:

1. Any and all new members will be given full disclosure during New Member Education, including but not limited to the disclosure of:
 - a. The Lion Caucus Constitution,
 - b. A schedule of member events and activities, and
 - c. A copy of the University Hazing Policy, prescribed by Policies and Rules for Student Organizations. Also available upon request by the Office of Student Activities.
2. All members, including but not limited to new members and recruits, reserve the right to refrain from participating in any activities without consequence, based upon personal/religious beliefs, personal values, or moral reserve as defined by the member.
3. Any and all interaction/activity between members and/or new members will be limited to guidelines stated by university policy, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

G. Membership Requirements:

1. All active members must maintain a 2.5 (undergraduate) or 3.0 (graduate) GPA.
2. All active members must remain in good standing with the University.
3. All active members must perform duties as required of them as directed by the Executive Board.
4. All honorary members must currently hold an elected office.

H. Membership Violations:

1. In the case of violations of constitutional policies and/or a conflict between members within the organization the highest ranking officer that is not involved in the conflict, with the assistance from the advisor, will facilitate an informal mediation procedure.
2. The mediator shall:
 - a. Arrange for a mediation meeting outside of the regular organization business meeting
 - b. Explain their role as the impartial party and the objectives of the mediation
 - c. Set ground rules
 - d. Allow each party to express their views by allowing the conversation to go where the parties wish it to go
 - e. Collect any available resources that might assist in the resolution (financial documents, emails, photos, etc.)
 - f. As a third party, do not suggest resolutions but rather leave the responsibility for the resolution with the parties involved
 - g. Facilitate goal setting to reach a win-win resolution

I. Membership Termination and Removal:

1. An Active member may voluntarily terminate membership with the Lion Caucus by submitting a letter of resignation to the Executive Board.
2. In consultation with the advisor, the Executive Board reserves the right to remove an active or honorary member who is not following the rules set forth by this constitution or the policies of the organization or the University, with a super majority vote of Executive Board members - 80% of Executive Board.

IV. **Officers**

A. Executive Positions:

1. The Executive Positions shall consist of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Director of Communications, and Director of Student Outreach.

B. Duties of Office:

1. The President is the spokesperson for the organization. The President presides at all meetings.
2. The Vice President shall serve as President when the President is unable to do so.
3. The Treasurer shall be charged with handling all organizational finances.
4. The Secretary shall be charged with recording meeting minutes and corresponding with members.
5. The Director of Communications shall be charged with maintaining the organization's online/social media presence.
6. The Director of Student Outreach shall be responsible for informing, meeting and coordinating activities which include other student organizations or the student body.

C. Eligibility for Office:

1. Candidates must be full-time, officially registered active student members to be selected as officers at the time of the appointment or election.
2. Officers may change from full-time to part-time, or vice versa, after becoming an officer. Student organizations may establish and apply additional eligibility criteria for appointed or elected leaders/officers, but should first seek approval from the Office of Student Activities.

D. Elections:

1. The election meeting shall be publicized during the two meetings immediately preceding it.
2. The highest ranking officer, not seeking election, and the advisor shall conduct the election.
3. Nominations and elections shall take place during the March meeting of the spring semester.
4. An individual may not be nominated for office if they do not at the time of nomination meet all membership requirements, or if the individual plans to hold an executive position within another organization.
5. Election of Officers:
 - a. Any member may nominate an active member for any office by raising his/her hand at the appropriate time and being recognized by the presiding official.
 - b. Next, the active members shall cast secret, written ballots for the candidate of their choice. Each active member shall have one vote per office.
 - c. If a candidate receives the highest number of votes in an election for an office, then that candidate is the winner of the election for that office.
 - d. In the event of a tie, the ballot will be recast.
6. All officers serve for a term of one year, beginning in the month following elections and ending the month of elections.

7. No one involved in conducting the elections may be an official candidate

E. Filling unexpired vacancies:

1. Nominations are taken at the meeting following the vacancy. Elections also occur at this meeting.
2. The same process for the Election of Officers shall apply.

F. Discipline and Removal from Office:

1. Lion Caucus Officers may be censured and/or removed from office for neglect of duties.
2. Process of Discipline
 - a. An active member submits a formal petition for censure and/or removal to the Advisor for approval of their request.
 - b. Approved formal petitions will be reviewed by the Executive Board at their next meeting.
 - i. The officer under review will have the opportunity to speak on his/her behalf.
 - ii. In the event the accused is the President, the Vice President shall preside the disciplinary process.
 - c. A two-thirds vote by secret ballot counted by the Advisor and presiding officer is required for censure or removal.
 - i. The officer under review cannot vote in these procedures.
 - d. A removed officer has the right to appeal the decision to membership at the next Active Membership meeting.

V. **Executive Board**

- A. The Executive Board shall be comprised of the executive officers, and the Advisor.
- B. The Advisor shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Executive Board.
- C. The Executive Board is empowered to act for the Active membership in the intervals between Active membership meetings and for any other purposes outlined by this constitution.

VI. **Meetings**

- A. The Lion Caucus will convene at least two Active membership meetings per semester.
- B. Active members shall be given adequate advance notice of all meetings by email.
- C. The President may call special meetings should they see fit.
- D. Active members shall attend at least 75% of active membership meetings.

VII. **Voting**

- A. Only active members may vote.
- B. Quorum for all voting shall be thirty-three percent (33%) of the active membership.
- C. A simple majority (50% +1) shall be necessary for all voting. This majority shall be derived from the active members present.

VIII. **Committees**

- A. Committees may be approved by the Executive Board for the purpose of working on a task that is consistent with the purpose of the Lion Caucus.

IX. Parliamentary Authority

- A. "Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised" by Sarah Corbin Roberts shall be used in all cases not covered by this constitution.

X. Amendments to the Constitution

- A. Amendments to this constitution may be introduced at the conclusion of any meeting by any Active member. Voting shall occur at the meeting following its introduction, with the amendment(s) taking effect thereafter:
 - 1. Two-thirds of Active Membership concur.
 - 2. Approval of the Advisor.
- B. All amendments are subject to the approval of the Office of Student Activities to ensure that they align with University policies and rules.

XI. Accessibility of this Constitution

- A. Copies of this constitution shall be made available to anyone upon request.

XII. Finances

- A. Lion Caucus funds are to be deposited and handled exclusively through the Associated Student Activities (ASA) in 240 HUB.
- B. This organization will not have an off-campus account(s).
- C. A member of the Executive Board of the Lion Caucus may spend up to \$50 of the organization's funds without prior approval, so long as the item(s) being purchased is/are for the use of the Lion Caucus.
- D. All expenditures greater than \$50 must be pre-approved by the Executive Board.
- E. No Active member or Honorary Member shall be required to pay dues.

XIII. Advisor

- A. The Advisor shall be appointed by the Vice President of Government and Community Relation of the Pennsylvania State University.
- B. Lion Caucus must retain an advisor at all times. The Advisor will be a full-time faculty or staff member of the Pennsylvania State University, University Park campus.