



# CONSTITUTION

and

# BYLAWS

of the

# FORUM ON BLACK AFFAIRS

May 1985

Revised and Adopted May 2006



## C O N S T I T U T I O N

### ARTICLE I.

#### NAME AND PURPOSE

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|-----------|---|---------|
| Section 1 | The name of this organization shall be the Forum on Black Affairs of The Pennsylvania State University.   | Name    |
| Section 2 | The Forum shall take an active role in advancing the interests of the Black community at Penn State. Special emphasis shall be placed on initiating and maintaining an environment that encourages individual and community development through programs and activities that promote the cultural, social, academic, and educational life of the Black community. | Purpose |

**ARTICLE II.**

**MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1	Any faculty, staff, or graduate student of Penn State may become a Regular member of the organization by accepting the terms of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Forum and by paying annually in advance the requisite membership fee as prescribed by the Bylaws.	Regular Membership
Section 2	An Affiliate member shall be any person who is not a faculty, staff, or graduate student of Penn State who accepts the terms and conditions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Forum and pays annually in advance the requisite membership fee as prescribed by the Bylaws.	Affiliate Membership
Section 3	Anyone who qualifies as a Regular member and pays a single life membership fee as designated by the Executive Committee shall be a Life member and will have the privileges of Regular membership without paying annual dues. When Life members leave Penn State, they will have the privileges of Affiliate membership without paying annual dues. If they return to Penn State as employees or graduate students, they will again have Regular membership privileges without being subject to annual dues.	Life Membership
Section 4	A member who has exemplified the principles of the Forum may be appointed by the Executive Committee to the Council of Elders. Membership on the Council of Elders shall be for life, unless otherwise designated by the Council of Elders. Members of the Council serve in an advisory capacity to the President and Executive Committee.	Council of Elders
Section 5	Only members who appear on the current membership list as Life or current dues-paying Regular or Affiliate members shall be considered members in good standing.	Members in Good Standing
Section 6	Only Regular and Life members in good standing may vote at regular or special Forum meetings, for the election of Forum officers, and to amend the Forum Constitution and Bylaws (Affiliate members are not considered voting members for these purposes).	Voting Members

### **ARTICLE III.**

#### **AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION**

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members in good standing at a meeting designated by the Executive Committee for amending the Constitution. The proposed amendment must be submitted to the Executive Committee at least sixty (60) days prior to its consideration. All voting members must be provided with the proposed amendment and notified of the vote at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. Voting may be in person or by written proxy. All proxies must be approved by the Executive Committee beforehand. A quorum for such a meeting shall be a majority of voting members in good standing present and/or represented by written proxy.

# BYLAWS

## ARTICLE I.

### OFFICERS

Section 1	The elective officers of The Forum shall be a President, President-elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. All officers shall be Regular or Life members in good standing.	Elective Officers
Section 2	The President shall (a) preside at regular meetings of the Forum and serve as chair of the Executive Committee; (b) appoint chairs and members of all committees, except the Nominating Committee, not directly elected by the membership or by the Executive Committee; (c) exercise general executive authority on behalf of the Forum subject to approval of the membership and the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws; (d) countersign all requisitions for disbursements from the Forum treasury; (e) perform such other functions and exercise such further duties as may be voted from time to time by the Forum membership or the Executive Committee; and (f) serve as an ex officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.	President
Section 3	The President-elect shall perform all the duties of the President in the event of the President's absence or disability. The President-elect shall become President at the end of the one-year designated term of office. The President-elect is responsible for coordinating the affairs and activities of all committees and for coordinating meetings between committee chairs.	President-elect
Section 4	The Secretary shall (a) give advance notice of all regular and Executive Committee meetings, take full and accurate minutes at these meetings, present these minutes for approval at the next meeting, and maintain a permanent record of the minutes; (b) maintain Forum listserves; (c) submit to the Forum at its annual meeting an annual report of the status and activities of the Forum; and (d) serve as an ex officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.	Secretary
Section 5	The Treasurer shall (a) receive all monies of the Forum and promptly deposit these monies in the name of the Forum in a separate account or accounts in a designated bank, trust company, or financial institution. No money shall be withdrawn from any such account except by check signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by the President; (b) make authorized disbursements on requisitions signed by the Treasurer and counter-signed by the President. Each requisition shall cite the amount and purpose of the payment requested. Any requisition of \$50 or more must be approved by the Executive	Treasurer

Committee; (c) submit financial reports at all regular and Executive Committee meetings or whenever required by either body, showing receipts and disbursements and outstanding accounts unpaid since the last report; (d) submit an annual financial report at the annual meeting of the Forum to which shall be appended a statement signed by the President and the Secretary that indicates concurrence with the report; and (e) work closely with the Membership Committee in the collection of annual dues.

Section 6	The Past President shall serve as an ex officio member of the Executive Committee for a one-year term immediately following service as President. The Past President will assist in Executive Committee deliberations and shall chair the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Banquet and Nominating Committees.	Past President
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**ARTICLE II.**  
**COMMITTEES**

Section 1	The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, President-elect, Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the chairs of the Standing Committees (except the Nominating Committee). All members of the Executive Committee must be Regular or Life members in good standing.	Executive Committee
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Section 2	The Executive Committee shall (a) have general control of the affairs and program of the Forum subject to the authority of the Forum membership and the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws; (b) render a report containing the reports of all Standing and Special committees at the regular meetings of the Forum and whenever otherwise required; (c) approve the chairs of the various Standing Committees as appointed by the President at its first meeting following the election; (d) represent the general body in grievance procedures and in actions affecting the general membership body or individuals; (e) create Special Committees as needs arise; (f) fill all vacancies in Forum offices; and (g) decide matters of Forum policy subject to endorsement by the Forum membership.	Duties of the Executive Committee
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Section 3	The Standing Committees of the Forum shall be Education, Membership, Women on Black Affairs, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Banquet Committee, and the Humanitarian Service Award Committee. The members of all Standing and Special Committees, except the Nominating Committee, shall be appointed by the President in consultation with each committee chair. All committees shall consist of not less than three (3) members. All members of Standing Committees must be Forum members in good standing (Affiliate	Standing Committees
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members of the Forum may be members of Standing Committees, though not chairs).

Section 4 The duties of the Standing Committees shall be as follows.

Education

Education

The Education Committee shall (a) be the center of education on issues, programs, and policies affecting the mission of the Forum; (b) stimulate interest in the Forum; (c) be informed regarding conditions affecting the Black community at the University and the larger community; (d) study and disseminate information to members of the Forum, the University, and the general public regarding issues, programs, and policies affecting the Black community; and (e) work closely with other organizations and groups in developing educational and cultural programs which reflect the accomplishments of the Black community.

Membership

Membership

The Membership Committee shall (a) work throughout the year to maintain and increase the membership of the Forum; (b) be responsible for planning and organizing the annual membership campaign; (c) be responsible for soliciting new members and for securing renewals of memberships; and (d) report at regular Forum meetings the number of members in good standing and status of Committee efforts to maintain and increase membership.

Women on Black Affairs

Women on  
Black Affairs

The Women on Black Affairs Committee shall coordinate activities that directly pertain to the advancement of Black women at Penn State.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Banquet Committee

MLK  
Banquet

The MLK Banquet committee shall be chaired by the Past President, with the President-elect and the Treasurer also serving. At least three (3) other members shall also serve. The committee shall plan and implement an activity to take place annually on January 15th and shall, within the limits of the resources of the Forum, provide the community with an activity which duly commemorates the life of Dr. King.

Humanitarian Service Award Committee

Humanitarian  
Award

The Humanitarian Service Award Committee shall seek nominations to honor a person who has provided outstanding service to African American citizens of Pennsylvania, especially at Penn State or the Centre Region. The committee will be chaired by a former president of the Forum and include at least three additional former presidents. If a suitable candidate is identified, the Humanitarian Service Award shall be presented at the MLK Banquet.

Section 5	Each year the Executive Committee shall appoint at the regular March meeting a Nominating Committee to coordinate the election of officers for the next year. The Committee shall be comprised of not less than five (5) nor more than nine (9) Regular or Life members in good standing with no more than two (2) members of the Executive Committee. The Past President shall chair the Nominating Committee. In the event that the Past President cannot serve, the President will appoint the chair.	Nominating Committee
Section 6	The President or Executive Committee may appoint Special Committees as the need arises. All members of Special Committees must be Forum members in good standing (Affiliate members of the Forum may be members of Special Committees, though not chairs).	Special Committees

**ARTICLE III.**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Section 1	The Nominating Committee shall meet promptly to select candidates for Forum offices: President-elect, Secretary, and Treasurer, with no more than three (3) candidates for any office. The Committee shall then present a slate of candidates, in writing, at the regular April meeting. The Forum membership may modify the slate by majority vote, not to exceed three (3) candidates for any office. No members shall be nominated without their consent.	Nomination Process
Section 2	Ballots shall be distributed to all Regular and Life members in good standing by no later than April 10 each year, with provision made for secret balloting. Ballots shall be returned to the Nominating Committee and tallied within two (2) weeks of distribution by no less than two (2) members of the Committee, one of whom must be the chair. Candidates who receive a plurality of votes will be elected. The results will be communicated to the Executive Committee, and ballots will be retained by the Nominating Committee for sixty (60) days and made available to the Executive Committee upon request. The Executive Committee shall announce and install the new officers at the regular May meeting.	Election and Installation of New Officers
Section 3	All officers shall hold office for one (1) year or until their successors are installed, unless they leave Penn State, resign from office, or are removed for dereliction of duty. All vacancies of elected offices will be filled by temporary appointments made by the Executive Committee followed by elections within sixty (60) days of the vacancy.	Tenure in Office

## ARTICLE IV.

### **MEETINGS**

Section 1	Regular meetings of the Forum shall be scheduled September through May or coincident with the official University academic year calendar, at least once a month; there may be special meetings as required. Regular meetings shall be held on the first Wednesday of each month.	Regular Meetings
Section 2	The regular May meeting will also be the annual meeting to receive and act upon reports from the officers.	Annual Meeting
Section 3	Special meetings may be called at any time and place on three (3) days' written or email notice to all members in good standing by direction of the President, or any three (3) members of the Executive Committee, or by any five (5) members in good standing. The notice shall state the purpose for which the meeting is called. Only those matters identified in the purpose statement can be discussed at such special meetings.	Special Meetings
Section 4	The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a month at such times and places as it may determine. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President, Secretary, or by two (2) members of the Committee on two (2) days' written or email notice.	Meetings of the Executive Committee
Section 5	The Standing Committees shall meet regularly once a month or at such time and places as they may determine. They shall inform the President of the time and place of the meeting. Special meetings may be called by the chair or by two (2) members on two (2) days' written or email notice.	Meetings of the Standing Committees
Section 6	A quorum for all regular or special meetings is twenty (20) percent of the Regular and Life membership in good standing or fifteen (15) of these members present, whichever is less; a quorum for all committees is a majority of all committee members in good standing present (Affiliate members may vote in committee). No official business may be conducted without a quorum. A simple majority will decide all votes. Voting at meetings may not be by proxy. If a quorum is not present at any meeting, those present may adjourn the meeting to a day, hour, and place specified. Without further notice, all business which might lawfully have been transacted during the original meeting may be transacted at the rescheduled meeting.	Quorum and Voting



## **ARTICLE V.**

### **DUES, FEES, AND ASSESSMENTS**

Eligible persons become members upon payment of a membership fee established annually by the Executive Committee. Fees shall be divided as follows: A fee for a single membership of faculty and staff, a fee for graduate students, a fee for Life memberships, and a fee for joint membership of faculty, staff, and graduate students and their spouses or partners. The membership chair may recommend yearly changes in the above fee division and proposed schedule subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. All checks shall be made payable to the Forum on Black Affairs.

## **ARTICLE VI.**

### **EXPULSION, SUSPENSION, OR REMOVAL OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS**

The Executive Committee, upon satisfactory evidence that an officer or member of the Forum is guilty of conduct not in accord with the principles, aims, and purposes of the Forum as specified in this Constitution and Bylaws, or is guilty of conduct detrimental to the best interests to the Forum, may order suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary action against such officer or member after a full hearing. Any disciplinary action shall be subject to reversal by voting members in good standing at a regular or special Forum meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII.**

### **FISCAL BUSINESS YEAR**

The fiscal and business year of the Forum shall begin July 1 and end June 30.

## **ARTICLE VIII.**

### **AMENDMENTS TO THESE BYLAWS**

Amendments to the Bylaws may be adopted at any meeting of the Forum by majority vote, provided that the amendment shall have been presented in writing at the preceding regular meeting and circulated in the minutes of that meeting.