

# United Students Against Sweatshops

## International Constitution

### Table of Contents

[Table of Contents](#)

[Preamble](#)

[Article I — Name](#)

[Article II — Objectives](#)

[Article III — Membership](#)

[Article IV — Structure](#)

[Article V — Leadership Elections](#)

[Article VI — Campaign Structure](#)

[Article VII — Gatherings](#)

[Article VIII — Ratification and Amendment](#)

[Article IX — Sexual Assault Within USAS](#)

### Preamble

We, the members of United Students Against Sweatshops, are dedicated to building student and worker power through organizing at our educational institutions around the world. This document shall serve as the official Constitution of our organization as we believe it outlines the values, structures, and processes that have supported our organization in accomplishing our work within the global labor movement.

### Article I — Name

This organization shall be known as United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS).

### Article II — Objectives

**Section 1:** The purpose of USAS shall be:

- a. To build union power and advance the rights of workers on our campuses, communities, and across the globe;
- b. To organize a progressive student movement that challenges corporate power and fights for economic justice for students and working people;
- c. To advance the rights and interests of students and workers through grassroots organizing and strategic direct action campaigns;

d. To be democratic in our governance by empowering members both through formal structures and bottom-up student movement building;

e. To incorporate collective liberation into our internal and external organizing.

**Section 2:** The membership shall adopt additional statements of Mission, Vision, and Organizing Philosophy in accordance with these objectives.

## **Article III — Membership**

### **Section 1: Eligibility**

a. Any person active in a USAS local who is enrolled in an educational institution is eligible to join USAS as a member. The Coordinating Committee is empowered to make exceptions to the enrollment requirement as necessary.

b. All members must pay monthly dues to the national organization according to a dues structure adopted by the Coordinating Committee. The dues structure shall be sliding scale, starting at \$0 per month. All members must affirm their commitment to USAS through a pledge developed by the CC.

c. Unless otherwise specified, the word “member” as used in this document shall mean a person meeting the above criteria (a) and (b).

## **Article IV — Structure**

### **Section 1: Locals**

a. USAS operates as a federation, composed of locals at educational institutions that are affiliated with, but not subordinate to, the national organization.

b. Each affiliated local shall be assigned a local number by the Coordinating Committee. Once assigned, the number will remain associated in perpetuity with the campus at which the local is based.

c. As a requirement of affiliation, locals must have at least two USAS members at all times and must agree to the organizational objectives in Article 2, Section 1, and any additional requirements that may be adopted by the Coordinating Committee.

### **Section 2: Coordinating Committee**

a. The membership shall annually elect six representatives to serve on the national Coordinating Committee (CC) for one year. An additional representative will be elected annually by and from the Regional Organizers. Procedures for elections are described in Article V.

b. The Coordinating Committee shall be composed of the following positions:

1. International Solidarity Committee Representative

2. Campus Worker Justice Committee Representative
3. Collective Liberation Committee Representative
4. Collective Liberation Committee Representative
5. At-Large Representative
6. At-Large Representative
7. Regional Organizer Representative

**c.** In between convenings of the annual Summer Retreat, the CC shall be the ultimate decision-making body of the organization. The CC shall strive to make all decisions in accordance with the wishes of the membership, as expressed at the Summer Retreat.

**d.** The CC shall be responsible for hiring, firing, and supervision of the National Staff. It is the right and duty of the National Staff to run the day-to-day operations of the organization, except that the CC shall review all organizational endorsements and partnerships, significant new national campaigns, and Regional Organizer personnel decisions.

**e.** The CC shall meet as necessary, at the call of the National Staff or any of its members. A majority of members constitute a quorum for all meetings.

### **Section 3: Worker Rights Consortium Representatives**

**a.** The membership shall annually elect five representatives to serve on the board of the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) for one year terms. Procedures for elections are described in Article V.

### **Section 4: National Staff**

**a.** The CC is empowered to hire full-time National Staff as necessary to carry out the work of the organization.

**b.** Except in extraordinary circumstances and when necessary for the health of the organization, National Staff shall work for two-year terms. Any extension must be approved by the CC.

**c.** It is the policy of USAS to recognize and bargain collectively with any representative designated by a majority of the National Staff, and to respect and adhere to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated between USAS and the National Staff.

### **Section 5: Regional Organizers**

**a.** Regional Organizers (ROs) are current USAS members who are hired to work as part-time organizers for one-year terms.

**b.** The National Staff shall hire, train, and supervise the ROs, subject to approval of the CC. The CC is authorized to create positions, if necessary, within the RO corps to act as lead organizers.

**c.** It is the policy of USAS to recognize and bargain collectively with any representative designated by a majority of the Regional Organizers, and to respect and adhere to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated between USAS and the Regional Organizers.

## **Section 6: Collective Liberation Committee**

- a.** The Collective Liberation Committee is composed of the Caucus Co-Chairs, appointed from the membership by the CC to serve one year terms, plus members of any caucus who wish to join.
- b.** Caucuses are created by the USAS membership when the membership sees a need to create a space for a historically marginalized identity. New caucuses must secure the approval of the Collective Liberation Committee.

## **Article V — Leadership Elections**

### **Section 1: Supervision of Elections**

- a.** All elections shall be supervised by the Elections Committee, in consultation with the National Staff.
- b.** The Elections Committee shall consist of 3 USAS members, appointed in June by the CC to one year terms. One member may be a current CC member, but the other two must not be current CC members.
- c.** Members of the Elections Committee are ineligible to run for any elected position, but may resign their position on the Elections Committee prior to declaring their intention to run for a position.
- d.** Members of the Elections Committee must remain neutral, and may not campaign or state a preference in any USAS election. The CC shall replace committee members found in violation of this restriction.
- e.** Vacancies on the Elections Committee shall be filled by the CC as soon as possible.

### **Section 2: Timing of Elections and Assumption of Office**

- a.** Annual elections shall start during the second week of April and last for ten days.
- b.** Newly elected leaders shall assume their positions on June 1.

### **Section 3: Election Procedures**

- a.** Regular elections shall be conducted by online vote, using procedures developed by the Elections Committee such that ballot secrecy and confidentiality are maintained to the maximum possible extent.
- b.** The Elections Committee shall develop and publicize procedures for each election.

### **Section 4: Voter Eligibility**

- a.** Only USAS members are eligible to vote in elections for leadership.
- b.** Each local may cast a maximum of 15 votes. If more than 15 USAS members from a single local vote, their votes are weighted and reduced proportionally such that the equivalent of only 15 ballots are counted.

## **Section 5: Candidate Eligibility**

- a.** All candidates for election must be members at the time of their election, and must intend to be eligible for membership for the following academic year.
- b.** Candidates for the International Solidarity Committee Representative, Campus Worker Justice Committee Representative, or Collective Liberation Committee Representative must be members of the appropriate committee at the time of their election.
- c.** All elected positions shall be voted on by the full membership, except the Regional Organizer Representative, which shall be chosen by and from among the Regional Organizers.

## **Section 6: Vacancies and Removal**

- a.** In the event of a vacancy in any position, the CC shall authorize a special election for a replacement, to be held within 30 days of the vacancy. Replacements shall serve out the remainder of their predecessors' terms.
- b.** Elected leaders may be removed by  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote of the CC and WRC representatives if, in the judgement of the elected leadership, removal is necessary for the well-being of the organization, or for violation of any provision of this Constitution.
- c.** If an elected leader's membership status changes, for example through leaving school or nonpayment of dues, they can be removed from their position by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote of the CC.

## **Article VI — Campaign Structure**

### **Section 1: Core Campaign Committees**

There shall be two core campaign committees: the International Solidarity Campaigns Committee (ISC) and the Campus Worker Justice Committee (CWJ).

### **Section 2: Other Campaigns**

- a.** Other campaign committees may be created by the CC as needed, however in recognition of their central role in USAS's mission, only the standing committees specified in Section 1 shall have designated representation on the CC.
- b.** Nothing in this article should be construed as preventing locals, in alliance with others and in consultation with the National Staff, from running campaigns outside of these structures.

### **Section 3: Delegation of Power**

Recognizing that our campaign work would be impeded by a burdensome process, national campaign decision-making is delegated whenever possible to the appropriate campaign committee and to the National Staff.

## **Article VII — Gatherings**

### **Section 1: Summer Retreat**

- a. Every summer, at a time and place chosen by the CC, leaders from USAS locals will gather for orientation, training, and discussions and decisions regarding the future of the organization.
- b. Ultimate decision-making power in all matters, except where limited by this Constitution, is vested in the membership as represented by members attending the Summer Retreat.
- c. Each local represented at the Summer Retreat shall be eligible to cast a maximum of two votes.
- d. Only USAS members are eligible to cast votes. If only one USAS member representing a local is in attendance, that member shall cast one vote. If two or more USAS members representing a local are in attendance, those members must confer and collectively submit two votes, which may be split, on behalf of their local.
- e. In the case of USAS members attending the Summer Retreat who do not represent a USAS local, the CC may authorize at most two members per campus to cast votes during that Summer Retreat.

### **Section 2: National Conference**

- a. If finances allow, every winter USAS members and interested students will gather for training, campaign strategy, and planning.
- b. The National Conference shall be held at a time designated by the CC and at a place chosen by vote of the Summer Retreat.

### **Section 3: Other Gatherings**

The CC and National Staff shall be empowered to organize other gatherings as necessary, however such gatherings shall not diminish or replace the decision-making role of the Summer Retreat.

## **Article VIII — Ratification and Amendment**

### **Section 1: Ratification**

This Constitution shall take effect upon a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote of attendees at the 2013 Summer Retreat.

### **Section 2: Amendment**

- a. Amendments to this Constitution shall require a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote at a Summer Retreat. Amendments take effect immediately, unless otherwise specified.
- b. Special Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by the CC to the locals in case of an urgent

need that, in the judgement of the CC, cannot wait until the next Summer Retreat. Special amendments shall require  $\frac{2}{3}$  of votes cast in order to be approved. Each local may cast two votes. The referendum shall be conducted by online vote, supervised by the Elections Committee.

## **Article IX — Sexual Assault Within USAS**

All individuals who have sexually assaulted\* someone will be immediately banned in all capacities from USAS. This will include both USAS and non-USAS members. Once a person has sexually assaulted\* someone they will be immediately removed from all leadership positions, membership status and activity within local chapters. Furthermore the individual will no longer be welcome to attend national or regional conferences in any capacity or participate in any protests, meetings or conference calls that USAS organizes, endorses or sponsors in any matter.

USAS will allow the sexual assault\* survivor to handle their relationship with the sexual assault\* perpetrator as they best see fit and support them in doing so. However, because sexual assault\* is a safety concern for all USAS members, all people who have sexually assaulted\* someone will be immediately removed from USAS in all capacities.

Sexual assault\* reports will be brought to the Coordinating Committee and staff members of USAS. These two bodies will be responsible of taking into consideration the accusations and will decide who will be in charge of removing the person from USAS. They will also be responsible of keeping the report private, not spreading information in regards to the sexual assault\* to other USAS members and of keeping the sexual assault\* survivor as safe as possible.

USAS will ensure that there be a clear explanation of consent in all USAS spaces and that it be clearly communicated to all that people who do not practice consent will be banned from the organization.

\* SEXUAL ASSAULT: USAS defines sexual assault as all sexual activities of any kind that happen without the clear consent of the people receiving and/or engaging in these activities. All activities that happen without people clearly stating that they are willing and comfortable to engage in them will be considered sexual assault. In addition, people engaging/receiving sexual activities must be in a position to consciously consent to sexual advances and activities. Consent while inebriated or in any way unable to consciously consent will be considered sexual assault.

*Ratified at the 2013 Summer Retreat on August 11, 2013 in Washington, DC.  
Amended at the 2014 Summer Convention, August 2014 in Washington, DC.*