

RUTGERS ASSOCIATION OF POLICY AND PLANNING STUDENTS **CONSTITUTION**

Preamble.

Effective constitutions must balance a multitude of objectives. They have to provide for stability, yet allow for change; they need to allow for efficient administration, yet maximize democratic participation. The best constitutions are those that provide sufficient detail to guide action, without constraining imagination and creativity. It is hoped that those who use and interpret the provisions of this document will be guided by this awareness.

Article 1: Name and Purpose.

The Rutgers Association of Policy and Planning Students (RAPPS) shall be a Graduate Student Organization at Rutgers University and a member organization of the Graduate Student Association.

The goals of the Rutgers Association of Policy and Planning Students (RAPPS) shall be to:

- a) Articulate and promote academic and professional interests of its members;
- b) Promote an environment that facilitates communication between its members and the faculty and administration of the departments of the Bloustein School and other members of the university community;
- c) Promote an awareness of the relationship between planning and public policy and the context in which it occurs;
- d) Provide practical alternatives for social involvement; and
- e) Allocate Graduate Student Association (GSA) funding to support student activities.

Article 2: Membership.

The following categories of membership will be recognized:

Full membership will be available to any graduate student who is registered for a minimum of one graduate course (or three credits) offered by the Bloustein School or at least one research credit for registered doctoral student at the Bloustein School who has completed his/her qualifying examinations. Only full members may vote on RAPPS affairs.

Article 3: The Executive Committee

The management of the day to day activities of the association shall be entrusted to an executive committee.

Article 3.1 Composition of the Executive Committee

The executive committee, at a minimum, shall consist of the following members, who represent the academic graduate programs at the Bloustein School, elected to terms of no more than two consecutive semesters. An executive term starts at the beginning of the spring semester and ends upon completion of the fall semester of the same calendar year. All positions are to be elected from the Bloustein School:

- a) Ph.D. (Urban Planning and Public Policy)
- b) M.C.R.P. and M.C.R.S. (Urban Planning)
- c) M.P.P. and M.P.A.P. (Public Policy)

One member will also be elected as a representative to the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association and serve as an adjunct Board Member.

Article 3.1.1

The executive committee shall consist of the following offices:

- a) President
- b) Vice President of Ph.D. Program
- c) Vice President of Urban Planning Program
- d) Vice President of Public Policy Program
- e) Secretary
- f) Treasurer
- g) Social Chair
- h) Service Chair
- i) Editor
- j) GSA Representative

Article 3.2 Responsibilities of the Executive Committee.

The following list of responsibilities of individual members is meant as a general guide to the organization of the executive committee's responsibilities, rather than a complete listing. Responsibilities may be reallocated amongst members of the executive committee or new responsibilities assigned at its discretion.

- a) The president shall serve as the overall chairperson for RAPPS, by organizing and running meetings. This person should remain relatively neutral in departmental issues, and act to benefit the organization as a whole. In addition, the other members of the executive committee should report their activities to the president prior to each RAPPS meeting. Finally, the President should be responsible for presenting the annual report at the Annual General Meeting.
- b) The three vice presidents shall each be responsible for attending all Bloustein School steering committee meetings, as well as representing the interests of their respective academic programs at executive committee and RAPPS meetings. At least one of the

three vice presidents shall attend every meeting of the Bloustein School Alumni Association (BSAA).

- c) The secretary will be responsible for taking minutes at RAPPS meetings, or collecting minutes from representatives elected to attend other association meetings. The secretary should prepare these minutes and make them available to all RAPPS members. He/she should also be responsible for keeping track of attendance at meetings, maintaining a record of correspondence and the upkeep of the RAPPS bulletin board in the student lounge.
- d) The treasurer shall be responsible for collecting fees or dues, administering the general financial affairs of the association, and preparing an annual report and balance sheet to be presented at the Annual General Meeting.
- e) The social chair shall be responsible for organizing regular social events for the members of the association and facilitating the participation of association members in Rutgers University intramural leagues. The social chair shall also be the head of the social committee. The social chair shall encourage alumni attendance at all RAPPS social events.
- f) The service chair shall be responsible for making service opportunities regularly available to the members of the association. The service chair shall also be the head of the service committee.
- g) The editor shall be responsible for soliciting and receiving article submissions for the association's member newsletter, as well as editing and publishing the member newsletter. The editor shall also be the head of the newsletter committee.
- h) The GSA representative shall be responsible for maintaining communication between the Rutgers GSA and RAPPS. Further, the GSA representative shall be responsible for regularly attending GSA meetings and ensuring the good standing of RAPPS as a member organization of the GSA.

Article 3.3 Election of the Executive Committee.

Election of the executive committee shall occur in the month of November for the term beginning in January of the following calendar year.

Article 3.3.1 Appointment of an Election Officer.

The election shall be the responsibility of an election officer. This officer shall be appointed by the executive committee and shall not himself/herself be seeking election. If the president is not seeking re-election, then he/she may so act if he/she wishes. The election officer shall be responsible for publicizing the nomination period and ensuring the integrity of the electoral process.

Article 3.3.2 The Nomination Process.

At least one week before the beginning of voting period, the election officer shall announce the start of the nomination period, by notifying the members electronically, through circulars, and/or the posting of the information in a common area and call for nominations, indicating

the requirements for a valid nomination, and the date and time by which nominations must be presented to her/him, i.e. the end of the nomination period.

Article 3.3.3 The Election.

- a) As soon as possible after the closing of the nomination period, the election officer shall post a list of those nominated for the executive committee. The notice of nominees shall also contain information on where ballot papers are to be obtained, where the ballot box will be located, and the date and time at which voting will end.
- b) Ballot papers must then be placed in the ballot box.
- c) At the close of the election period, the election officer shall count the votes cast, and post the results as soon as possible.

Article 3.4: Operation of the Executive Committee

In general, it is expected that each member of the executive committee will fulfill his/her responsibilities in an ongoing and dutiful manner.

- a) To facilitate coordination between members, at least one regular meeting of the executive committee will be held each month during the academic year.
 - i. A quorum of the executive committee shall consist of a simple majority of the executive committee.
 - ii. Executive committee decisions on activities and policy for the association shall be entered into the minutes of the meeting.
 - iii. In the case of serious disagreement between members on any decision, such decision shall be formulated as a resolution, with a proposer and a seconder, and voted upon. A simple majority of the executive members present shall be sufficient to secure its success or failure.
 - iv. The date, time and place of each meeting are to be disseminated electronically to the RAPPS members and/or posted in a common area at least one week ahead of the meeting. Such meetings are to be open to all members, although only the executive members can vote on resolutions.
- b) In cases where RAPPS is confronted with abnormal circumstances, emergency meetings of the executive committee may be held, without the necessary notice, provided that:
 - i. At least a simple majority of the executive committee is present;
 - ii. Minutes of the meeting are taken; and

- iii. The minutes of an emergency meeting are adopted at a regular meeting of the executive committee to be called within a week of the emergency meeting.
- c) The executive committee shall establish guidelines for the allocation of GSA funding. The guidelines shall be adopted by a majority vote of the association annually.
- d) In cases where an individual fails to adequately fulfill his/her executive duties over a period of time, a member of the executive committee shall propose a motion of censure. The motion shall set out the reasons for dissatisfaction and, if seconded, shall be put to the vote. If passed, it shall be entered into the minutes of the meeting.

At the next regular meeting of the executive committee, the motion of censure shall be reintroduced as a motion for dismissal. If the performance of the censured member is still not satisfactory, the other members may express their dissatisfaction by voting to request resignation of the offending member. If passed, the offending member shall immediately submit his/her resignation.

- e) Vacancies that arise on the executive committee due to resignation shall be filled through appointment by the president. An interim election for the vacated post will then be held at the next general meeting of the association. In this case, nominations will be accepted at the meeting, and election will occur through a balloting at the meeting.

Article 3.5: Motion of No-Confidence in the Executive Committee.

The executive committee is at all times accountable to the membership. It may be removed from office through a motion of no-confidence adopted by a simple majority at an association meeting held under the provisions of article 4.

- a) In this case, the mandate of the executive committee will be terminated. It will nevertheless remain responsible for holding new elections within one week of the vote of no-confidence.
- b) It will be designated an “Interim Committee” for this period, responsible for day-to-day administration, but no new initiatives may be undertaken.

Article 4: RAPPS Meetings.

The general policy of RAPPS will be made through resolutions adopted by a simple majority of voting members present at meetings of RAPPS.

- a) General meetings of RAPPS shall be held at least once a semester.
 - i. One general meeting will occur within four weeks of the commencement of the Fall semester, and one within four weeks of the commencement of the Spring semester.
 - ii. The date, time and place for such general meetings shall be determined by the chair in consultation with the executive committee.
 - iii. The date, time and place for each general meeting shall be conveyed to the members electronically, through circulars, and/or the posting of the information in a common area at least one week in advance of its taking place.
 - iv. General meetings will be open to all members of RAPPS, although only full members may propose and vote on resolutions.
 - v. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the executive committee present.
- b) Other general meetings shall be called by the executive committee whenever necessary or upon receipt of a request signed by at least 15 members. They shall be subject to the same requirements set out in (a).
- c) Emergency meetings may be called by the executive committee in times of crisis. In this case, only one hour's notice shall be necessary. All resolutions adopted at such meetings must be confirmed at the next general meeting.

Article 5: Special Committees

From time to time it may be felt that there are issues of particular concern to the goals and/or interests of RAPPS and its members that require further study. In this case special committees may be appointed either by:

- a) The president in consultation with the executive committee; or
- b) By the president in response to a motion adopted at a RAPPS meeting.

The composition, terms of reference and length of appointment of the commission will be the responsibility of the executive committee.

Article 6: Constitutional Amendments.

This constitution is intended for the general guidance of the members and chosen representatives of the Rutgers Association of Policy and Planning students. As such, it should be interpreted as liberally as possible. However, should it become necessary to amend any of its provisions, this shall be possible through the votes of two-thirds of the members present at any general meeting of the association.

Constitution and articles adopted unanimously 2 November 1988.

Revised _____

Adopted _____

Constitution revised 21 April 2006