By-Laws of the English Student Association (ESA)

ARTICLE I: NAME, HISTORY, AND MISSION STATEMENT

* + Section 1.1 NAME
    - The name of the organization is English Student Association and the organization is referred to in these by-laws as the ESA.
  + Section 1.2 HISTORY
    - The ESA was founded in the late 1980's in response to student demands for curriculum and exam reform. The ESA successfully advocated for the elimination of the "four Norton" reading anthology written exam as well as the creation of the option to choose three custom fields on the oral examination. It created the ESA Student Handbook and instituted student course evaluations each semester.
  + Section 1.3 MISSION STATEMENT
    - The ESA is a student-run organization that seeks to improve living and working conditions of students in the Program by representing the interests of the students in the Graduate Center English Department. Representation shall include expressing concerns of the students to the faculty and administration as well as relaying information back to the students. The primary tasks of the ESA are to provide a forum for student concerns, sponsor a network of student mentors, oversee course evaluations, and run the student election process. In addition, the ESA runs an annual conference (with faculty participation) open to ESA members as well as students form other institutions.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERS

* + Section 2.1 GENERAL CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP
    - All matriculated student in the English Department at the CUNY Graduate Center shall be considered members of the ESA.
  + Section 2.2 RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBESHIP
    - Each member of the English Students Association shall be entitled to:
      * propose a topic for the ESA conference and volunteer to serve as conference chair or co-chair (actual chair determined by vote)
      * participate on the ESA-L listserv
      * nominate fellow students for positions on departmental, ESA, and GC committees
      * vote on all ESA elections ballots
      * vote either in person or by proxy on issues put to a vote at ESA meetings
      * propose an amendment to the by-laws or motion for a vote at ESA meetings (see below for procedure)
      * raise new business and suggest agenda items for ESA meetings

ARTICLE III: MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

* + Section 3.1 PLACE OF MEETINGS
    - All meetings of the Members shall be held at the Graduate Center. Meetings are commonly held in the English Department thesis room, when it is available, or in the department lounge. Meeting locations and room reservations should be coordinated through the Assistant Program Officer.
  + Section 3.2 FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS
    - Meetings should be held at least four (4) times per semester, approximately once every month. The first meeting should be scheduled during the first few weeks of the semester.
  + Section 3.3 DAY AND TIME OF MEETINGS
    - Traditionally, meetings have been held on Friday at 2:00 PM, although in theory the day and time are flexible. Meetings should be scheduled at a time that is convenient for as many students as possible. ESA Co-chairs should make every possible effort to avoid scheduling meetings that conflict with other English student-run events.
  + Section 3.4 NOTICE OF MEETINGS
    - Members shall be given notice of meetings at least one (1) week prior to the day of the meeting. In addition, ESA Co-chairs are strongly encouraged to announce a tentative meeting schedule for the semester at the beginning of the semester. ESA Co-chairs shall announce ESA meetings:
      * on the ESA-L list
      * on the Assistant Program Officer's mailing list (email), and
      * by posting an announcement on the bulletin board in the department lounge.
  + Section 3.5 QUORUM
    - A quorum at meetings is defined as those present at the meeting.
  + Section 3.6 ORDER OF BUSINESS
    - The order of business at all meetings shall be determined by the ESA Co-chairs, but the order of business to be followed at any meeting may be changed by any member in attendance at the meeting. An agenda outlining the order of business must be publicized at least seven (7) days prior to the day of the meeting. The agenda shall be publicized along with the notice of the meeting (see section 3.4).
  + Section 3.7 ACTION AT MEETINGS
    - All action that does not involve amending, altering, or otherwise changing the by-laws will be made at ESA meetings, according to the following procedure. In order for an issue to be voted on in an ESA meeting, it must appear on the agenda for that meeting. The agenda must have been made public at least one week prior to the meeting, in accordance with section 3.4. Any vote taken on action that was not previously publicized in accordance with section 3.4 will be considered invalid. Consequently, no issue may be raised and then voted on in the course of a single meeting.
    - Assuming the issue has been made public, and the vote has been announced properly, the actual vote will take place during the ESA meeting. Before the vote takes place, there will be a period of discussion, followed by the vote itself. All members present at the meeting will have one vote, excluding the Co-chairs, who only vote in the case of a tie. Students who are not able to attend the meeting can make an attending student or one of the Co-chairs their proxy (see section 3.8, below).
    - In order for action to be taken, the total votes for the action must equal at least 51% of the total votes. In the case of a tie, the Co-chairs will be allowed up to one (1) week's time to solicit the student body for further opinions, at which point they will decide whether to take action based on their judgment of what the majority of students think, or, lacking a clear sense of a majority opinion, what will best serve the students in the department.
  + Section 3.8 PROXIES
    - Each member may authorize another person or persons to act for him or her by proxy. The proxy should submit evidence of the member's vote in writing to the Co-chairs at the time of the vote. A printout of an email message or a handwritten note from the voting member to the proxy shall constitute acceptable evidence of the member's vote. Members can also ask the co-chairs to act as their proxy at meetings.
  + Section 3.9 MINUTES
    - The keeping of minutes of all ESA meetings shall be the responsibility of the Co-chairs. Co-chairs are expected to publish the minutes of all meetings on the ESA-L list within the one (1) week following the meeting.

ARTICLE IV: ESA CO-CHAIRS

* + Section 4.1 POWERS; VOTING
    - The primary goals of the co-chairs include facilitating discussion among members, acting as a liaison between the student body and the Executive Officer, and organizing ESA meetings. ESA Co-chairs also serve on the Executive Committee ex officio.
    - Co-chairs will not vote on actions at ESA meetings except in the event of a tie, as stated in section 3.7
  + Section 4.2 NUMBER OF CO-CHAIRS
    - The total number of Co-chairs will be two (2).
  + Section 4.3 NOMINATION, ELECTION, AND TERM OF CO-CHAIRS
    - Co-chairs will be nominated and elected according to the elections process. Co-chairs are nominated on the nominations form sent out by the elections committee, and are elected by a simple majority (51% of the total votes). Co-chairs serve for one year, but can be nominated and reelected in subsequent years.
  + Section 4.4 CO-CHAIR DUTIES
    - In addition to duties listed elsewhere in this document, the co-chairs are expected to perform the following tasks:
      * announce meetings in accordance with the guidelines for the notice of meetings in section 3.4
      * develop and publicize an agenda for meetings based on current student concerns. Agendas for meetings must be posted at least seven (7) days before the date of the meeting to ensure that all students have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with current ESA business.
      * set up the new student listserv at the beginning of the semester. This entails subscribing each new student to the list and sending out a welcome message.
      * Co-chairs are encouraged, but not required, to plan some kind of welcome event for new students and provide an opportunity for new students to meet continuing students.
      * assist in the planning and organization of revels by working with the Assistant Program Officer and the Executive Officer
      * facilitate the selection of the conference Chair(s) and topic
      * speak at the annual recruitment day event about the nature and purpose of the ESA
      * facilitate discussion about current issues on the ESA listserv. Act as an administrator of the list when necessary.
      * serve as a representative of students concerns to the Program's Executive Officer.
      * assign student mentors to incoming students (see section 4.5).
      * procure and manage the DSC funds designated for the ESA.
      * publicize the ESA to current and new students in the department. Suggested ways of doing this include the creation and mailing of a letter from the Co-chairs to new students outlining the nature and purpose of the ESA, the distribution of fliers in departmental mailboxes publicizing the ESA and the ESA-L list, ensuring that instructions on joining the ESA-L list are present in the department, and periodically sending these instructions out on the Assistant Program Officer's mailing list.
      * facilitate meetings between outgoing and incoming committee members
  + Section 4.5 STUDENT MENTORING
    - One of the most important duties of the Co-chairs is the administration of the student-mentoring program. Co-chairs are responsible for recruiting current students who are willing to mentor an incoming student. Each incoming student should be assigned to a current student who has volunteered to answer any questions the new student might have about the program, it's policies, etc. Student mentors should be assigned before the beginning of the semester. This is usually done by first sending out a request on the ESA-L list asking for volunteers. The Co-chairs should then acquire a list of incoming students and their areas of interest from either the Deputy Executive Officer or the Executive Officer. New students should be matched up with volunteers based on similar interests, if at all possible.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

* + Section 5.1 TYPES OF COMMITTEES
    - The ESA oversees student membership on departmental committees, ESA committees, and two Graduate Center committees (the Doctoral Student Council and the Graduate Council). Departmental and ESA committees include permanent committees and ad-hoc committees.
  + Section 5.2 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP
    - All ESA members (as defined by section 2.1) may serve on ESA committees and Program committees. Student committee members will be elected by ESA members following the elections procedure (as defined section 5.4.b). All committee members and co-chairs serve for one (1) year.
  + Section 5.3 COMMITTEE MEMBER DUTIES
    - All student committee members serve on committees as a representative of their peers in the program and are, as a result, expected to represent the interests of the students in the Program. Committee members are expected to report on committee business at ESA meetings. At least one student member from each committee should be present at every ESA meeting. If, for some reason, no committee members are able to attend the ESA meeting, at least one committee member should report committee business to the ESA-L list (or to the Co-chairs, who will include it in the meeting minutes). Committee members are expected to subscribe to the ESA list in order to remain up-to-date on student concerns.
    - Committee members must be present at all committee meetings, except in the case of an emergency or an unavoidable scheduling conflict. If a member is not able to be present, it is the responsibility of the member to inform the alternate member as well as any other committee members.
    - At the end of their term, each committee will create an end-of-term Committee Report for the benefit of incoming committee members. The Report should describe the committee's activities over the past year in order to facilitate a more fluid and productive turnover following the ESA election.
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  + Section 5.4 PERMANENT ESA COMMITTEES
    - COURSE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE: The course assessment committee is a permanent ESA Committee that oversees the dissemination, collection, and tallying of course evaluations. The committee is composed of six (6) student members, who are responsible for maintaining a publicly accessible collection of course evaluations in the department lounge.
    - THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE: The elections committee, which contains two (2) student members, is a permanent ESA Committee, the sole function of which is to conduct the election of student committee members and ESA Co-chairs. The elections committee is also responsible for including any valid proposed amendments to the ESA by-laws on the ballot. Candidates are nominated on a nominations ballot, sent out in March. The ballot containing all candidates and proposed amendments is sent out near the end of April. If there are three seats on a committee, for example, the three candidates with the most votes will serve on the committees. Candidates who are not elected serve as alternates, in an order based on how many votes they receive.
    - At the end of their term, each committee will create an end-of-term Committee Report for the benefit of incoming committee members. The Report should describe the committee's activities over the past year in order to facilitate a more fluid and productive turnover following the ESA election.
  + Section 5.5 AD HOC ESA COMMITTEES
    - The ESA may create ad-hoc committees by following the procedure for taking action outlined in section 3.7. There are currently no ad-hoc ESA committees.
    - This section (5.5) of the by-laws may be changed by the Co-chairs to reflect current ESA ad-hoc committees without going through the regular process for making changes to the by-laws. The process for creating adhoc committees, however, may only be changed by an amendment to the by-laws.
  + Section 5.6 PERMANENT DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES
    - ESA members serve on the following permanent departmental committees:
      * The Executive Committee: four (4) student members, and the ESA co-chairs who serve ex officio
      * The Admissions and Financial Aid Committee: two (2) student members
      * The Curriculum Committee: two (2) student members
      * The Faculty Membership Committee: two (2) student members
  + Section 5.7 AD HOC DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES
    - Students also serve on the following ad-hoc departmental committees:
      * The Diversity Committee: six (6) student members
      * The Fundraising Committee: six (6) student members
      * The Placement Committee: four (4) student members
      * The Recruitment Committee: five (5) student members
      * The Website Committee: four (4) student members, one student webmaster
    - This section (5.7) of the by-laws may be changed by the co-chairs to reflect current departmental committee structure without going through the regular process for making changes to the by-laws.
  + Section 5.8 GRADUATE CENTER COMMITTEES
    - Students serve on the following Graduate Center committees:
      * The Graduate Council: four (4) student members
      * The Doctoral Students Council: three (3) student members

ARTICLE VI: ESA STUDENT CONFERENCE

* + Section 6.1 PURPOSE STATEMENT
    - The purpose of the ESA conference is to provide a professional atmosphere for students to present their work to their peers and colleagues. Traditionally, the conference has been organized around a broad topic, so as to allow as many students as possible to participate. The conference is generally organized around a topic or a theme rather than a particular area so as not to be exclusive. The conference organizer(s) should consider proposals and abstracts from all students in the department and from students working at other colleges. In the past, department faculty have been asked to chair panels, and keynote speakers have been drawn from institutions across the country and from within the department.
  + Section 6.2 SELECTING A TOPIC AND CHAIR (OR CO-CHAIRS)
    - Discussion of conference topics generally takes place at ESA meetings and on the ESA-L list. The selection of a conference topic and chair shall take place at ESA meetings according to the procedure for taking action at meetings (section 3.7).
    - While anyone can, in theory, suggest a topic for the conference, the ESA will only consider topics that are associated with a student or students who are willing to act as chair or co-chairs of the conference. After a general discussion, any member who has a topic and is willing to take on the responsibility of chairing the conference shall be considered an eligible candidate. Multiple members may work together as Conference Co-chairs. Members who do not co-chair are encouraged to assist the conference Co-Chairs in running the conference.

ARTICLE VII: ESA-L LIST

* + Section 7.1 PURPOSE AND DISCLAIMER
    - The ESA-L list exists to provide an open forum for students to discuss departmental issues, publicize ESA meetings and business, make announcements, and engage in general discussion. List members should recognize that responsibility for postings on this list is with the individual contributors and such postings do not necessarily reflect either ESA or English program policy. Be advised that reports of committee work are not the official minutes of those committees.
    - List membership is limited to current and past ESA members, as defined in section 2.1.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

* + Section 8.1 AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS
    - These by-laws may be altered, amended, or repealed or new by-laws may be adopted by following the procedure for amending by-laws (section 8.2). The sections relating to ad-hoc committees (departmental and ESA) may be updated as is necessary by the Co-chairs to reflect changes in committee structure without following the procedure for amending bylaws (sections 5.5 and 5.7).
  + Section 8.2 PROCEDURE FOR AMENDING BY-LAWS
    - In order to make a change to the ESA by-laws, a proposal must be made in writing and presented at an ESA meeting, either in person or through a proxy. The proposal must then be seconded by someone in attendance at the meeting, in order for it to be considered. After a period of discussion, a vote will be held on the proposal at the following meeting, in accordance with the procedure for taking action at a meeting (section 3.7).
    - Once a proposal has been seconded and passed by a valid majority vote in an ESA meeting, the proposal shall then be added to the elections ballot as a proposed amendment or alteration to the ESA by-laws.
    - Any ESA member, as defined in section 2.1, may make proposals. It is the responsibility of the member making the proposal to compose the proposal and present it in person or by proxy at a meeting. Once the proposal has been passed in a meeting, it is the responsibility of the Co-chairs to provide the elections committee with a copy of the proposal for inclusion on the ballot.
    - In order to be adopted, the proposal must gain a simple majority (51%) of votes on the election ballot to pass. Once the amendment is passed, it is the responsibility of the Co-chairs to alter the by-laws accordingly.