

## **CUSU Disabled Students' Campaign Constitution**

This constitution shall be the governing document of the CUSU Disabled Students' Campaign, hereafter referred to as 'the Campaign'.

### **A – The Objectives of the Campaign**

1. The primary objective of the Campaign shall be to represent, and act in, the interests of its members. The Campaign shall pursue this objective by:

- a. providing support in navigating welfare, access, academic and social life as a disabled student
- b. actively enabling its members by countering internalized disablism, both by raising awareness of disability rights, and through the unified challenging of disablist attitudes, behaviours, institutions and spaces
- c. providing advocacy for members who are experiencing prejudice or discrimination based wholly or in part on their status as disabled
- d. seeking to change practices that routinely discriminate against disabled students
- e. challenging and countering the idea that it is primarily the bodies or minds of people with impairments that disable them, and promoting positive self-identity amongst disabled students
- f. promoting and spreading understanding and knowledge of the social model of disability, with a particular focus on how students are disabled by the University
- g. seeking to promote positive self-identity amongst disabled students, by countering internalized disablism, and working to bring into the Campaign people who might be unaware either of their status as disabled, or of the oppression that this entails
- h. raising awareness of the legal rights to which disclosure as a disabled student entitles members of the Campaign, and promoting access arrangements (including reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act) as basic rights, dispelling myths of privilege or nuisance in demanding them
- i. representing its members on the decision-making bodies of CUSU, and at a national level in the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign, and acting as a channel of communication between its members and these and other relevant bodies
- j. ensuring that the interests and views of the members of the Campaign are actively and effectively represented at all levels of the University
- k. liaison and cooperation with College JCRs and MCRs with regards to the interests of its members within their colleges
- l. working closely with the CUSU Welfare Team on its work in promoting equal opportunities for all, opposing prejudice and discrimination, and any work it might do

to raise awareness of mental health issues, impairment and disability issues, and avenues of support

- m. working with the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign, and other disability rights organizations, towards the complete acceptance and integration of the bodies and minds of people with impairments, and an end to the widespread practice of disabling them.

In furtherance of this objective, the Campaign shall seek:

- a. the repeal of all legislation discriminating against and disabling citizens with impairments
  - b. equal rights for citizens with impairments to be enforced by law
  - c. to counter the disablism which is, in its many guises, so widespread in society, both nationally and internationally
2. The Campaign shall be independent of any religious body or party political organization, but may affiliate to or work together with any organization that may be working to further the interests of its members.
  3. Except in so far as may be necessary for the support of a disadvantaged section of society or of the disabled community, the Campaign shall pursue its object without regard to ethnic origin, religion, nationality, colour, gender orientation, age, sexual orientation, or HIV status, provided that this provision shall not invalidate the provision of Articles D. 3. f, h, i and j and Article D. 9 below.
  4. The Campaign shall be a democratic body.

#### B – Membership

1. The Disabled Students' Campaign shall be an association of the members of the University of Cambridge in statu pupillari who self-define as disabled, or who have themselves experienced disability, and are pursuing or intermitting from a course of study or research in the University.
2. All members of the Disabled Students' Campaign shall have the right to:
  - a. Participate in the decision-making processes of Open Meetings
  - b. Vote in CUSU Disabled Students' Campaign elections
3. Membership shall not be withheld or revoked and members shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of any consideration other than their status as not reasonably self- defining as disabled, or not having themselves experienced disability.

#### C – Open Meetings

1. Open Meetings shall be the primary decision-making body of the Campaign.
2. All members of the Campaign shall have the right to participate in the decision-making process of Open Meetings.
3. Quoracy for Open Meetings shall be 1/15 of the total number of votes cast in the most recent election of the Disabled Students Officer, or 1.5 times the current number of members on the

executive committee, whichever is the greater, with a minimum of five and a maximum of twenty five. Decisions of a non-quorate Open Meeting may be ratified at the next quorate Open Meeting. It shall be the duty of the campaign to make voting on campaign decisions to be as accessible as possible; to this aim, quoracy requirements where possible can be satisfied by the votes of members that are not physically present at an Open Meeting.

4. Ordinary members of CUSU who are not members of the Campaign may attend meetings and speak at the invitation of the Chair. Other groups or individuals may attend and speak as long as no objections are raised by attending members. No non-member may contribute to the consensus decisions of Open Meetings. Attendance by a non-member denotes a commitment to Article C. 9 below, and brings them under its jurisdiction.

5. If another autonomous campaign or representative group has a self-defining Disabled Students' Officer, it shall be noted that their input into the Campaign's meetings is representative of a constituency.

6. Procedure for conduct of Open Meetings shall be set out in the Campaign's Standing Orders.

7. As a matter of course, Open Meetings shall be as accessible as possible, without waiting for someone to come forward with a particular access need; this shall include meeting the access needs of intermitting members. If someone does come forward with an unforeseen access need, it shall be met as a matter of course from then on. If the Campaign does not have the resources to meet a particular access need, the Campaign shall seek funding to meet that access requirement as a priority, and keep the excluded person or people included in every way possible in the meantime.

8. Wherever possible, Open Meetings shall be held in such a fashion that people can participate without needing to physically attend, contributing towards quoracy and decision-making.

9. Open Meetings shall be a safe space. Everyone in attendance at the meeting shall actively seek to avoid perpetuating any form of oppression through prejudiced or discriminatory language or behaviour. If any individual is engaged in such oppressive language or behaviour, it shall be the responsibility of the group to mediate and, if necessary, agree by consensus that that individual should apologize and cease to engage in such behaviour or, if no such change in behaviour is forthcoming, that that individual has excluded themselves from the safe space by use of persistent oppressive language or behaviour.

10. Elected Officers shall share amongst themselves the responsibility for facilitating Open Meetings. Facilitators shall ensure that people are speaking in turn and not interrupting each other, and find ways of structuring discussion so as to keep it productive and move it towards consensus. They shall have no special powers and shall facilitate discussion and decision-making. For the purposes of the CUSU Constitution, the facilitator shall be considered the Chair of the meeting.

11. Where possible, the date, time and location of Open Meetings shall be announced by the facilitator five days in advance and remain fixed, and it shall be made clear to people who might attend that they can rely on this.

12. Elected Officers shall share the responsibility for taking and disseminating detailed minutes of Open Meetings.

13. Elected Officers of the Campaign shall be bound in their actions by the decisions of Open Meetings, and mandated as appropriate to facilitate their implementation.

14. Open Meetings of the Campaign shall be held at least four times during Michaelmas and Lent full term and at least once during Easter full term.

#### D – Elected Officers

1. Only members of the Campaign are eligible to run for elected positions in the Campaign.

2. Elected Officers of the Campaign shall facilitate the running of the Campaign at the direction of the consensus decisions of Open Meetings

3. All non-sabbatical Elected Officer roles of the Campaign can be filled by up to two student members of the Campaign, except for the Welfare Officer and Socials Officer positions, which can be held by up to three student members of the Campaign, provided for all roles the candidates run for the positions together.

4. The Elected Officers of the Campaign shall comprise the following:

- a) The Disabled Students' Officer
- b) The Welfare Officer
- c) The Access & Funding Officer
- d) The Academic Affairs Officer
- e) The Socials Officer
- f) The Women's' Officer
- g) The LGBT+ Officer
- h) The Trans Officer
- i) The BME Officer
- j) The Graduate Students' Officer
- k) The Mature Students' Officer
- l) The International Students' Officer
- m) The Computing Officer

5. The responsibilities of the Elected Officers shall be as follows:

- a) The Disabled Students' Officer:
  - i) The Disabled Students' Officer is the sabbatical Disabled Students' Office for CUSU and responsible for running the ordinary business of the Disabled Students' Campaign.
  - ii) The Disabled Students' Officer is bound by decisions made at Open Meetings, and by the articles of the constitution.

- iii) The Disabled Students' Officer's Role is to provide individual support for the members of the Disabled Students' Campaign, to co-ordinate the work of the Committee.
  - iv) The Disabled Students' Officer should work to protect the autonomous status of the campaign.
  - v) The Disabled Students' Officer is responsible for providing training for the Committee and for college Disabled Students' Officers, or their equivalent positions.
  - vi) The Disabled Students' Officer represents the Disabled Students' Campaign on University committees, to other CUSU sabbatical officers, and at CUSU council.
  - vii) The Disabled Students' Officer is elected in the general CUSU sabbatical election.
  - viii) No person may serve as the Disabled Students' Officer more than twice.
  - ix) The Disabled Students' Officer must self-define as disabled to be eligible for the role.
- b) The Welfare Officer shall:
- i) Provide welfare support for disabled students.
  - ii) Represent the Campaign to JCRs, MCRs, Disabled Students' Officers and other related positions that require an officer to self-define as disabled in order to be eligible, seeking to coordinate on disability rights and related issues.
  - iii) Attend relevant training sessions organised by the CUSU Welfare Officer, presenting the views of the Campaign, and advocating the welfare and rights of disabled students.
  - iv) Coordinate the provision of fully accessible welfare events during stressful points of the year.
- c) The Access & Funding Officer shall:
- i) Act as a contact point for prospective disabled students.
  - ii) Attend the CUSU Access Forums organised by the CUSU Access & Funding Officer, presenting the views of the Campaign and working to ensure that the specific access issues faced by disabled students are being addressed.
  - iii) Raise awareness amongst college Access Officers of the specific access issues faced by disabled students.
  - iv) Coordinate action to increase the accessibility of the University to disabled students.
  - v) Be responsible for making Open Meetings accessible, as outlined in C. 6, C. 7, C. 8 and the standing orders of the Campaign.
- d) The Academic Affairs Officer shall:
- i) Provide academic support for disabled students.
  - ii) Attend CUSU Education Team Meetings, presenting the views of the Campaign and working to inform their work with an understanding of the specific issues faced by disabled students.

- iii) Coordinate action to promote full accessibility across all aspects of academic life.
  - iv) Act as a channel of communication between the Disability Resource Centre and the Campaign, seeking to coordinate their work and raise awareness of the support provided by the DRC.
  - v) Raise awareness amongst college Academic Affairs Officers and Faculty Reps of the specific academic affairs issues faced by disabled students.
- e) The Social Officer shall:
- i) Organize fully accessible social events for disabled students and others who support the aims of the Campaign.
  - ii) Promote awareness of accessibility across events being organized for Cambridge students.
  - iii) Support disabled students in gaining the confidence to assert their right to be included in all aspects of social and extra-curricular life.
  - iv) Coordinate action to challenge inaccessibility in social and extra-curricular life.
- f) The Women's Officer shall:
- i) Be a member of the Campaign who self-defines as a woman.
  - ii) Represent the interests of disabled women to CUSU Women's Campaign.
  - iii) Act in the interests of disabled women within the Campaign, and be a point of contact for any issue specifically related to the welfare of women.
  - iv) Coordinate action and awareness-raising on the relationship between women's liberation and disabled liberation.
- g) The LGBT+ Officer shall:
- i) Be a member of the Campaign who is LGBT+.
  - ii) Represent the interests of disabled LGBT+ people to the CUSU LGBT+ Campaign.
  - iii) Act in the interests of LGBT+ people within the Campaign, and be a point of contact for any issue specifically related to the welfare of its LGBT+ members.
- h) The Trans Officer shall:
- i) Be a member of the Campaign who is trans.
  - ii) Represent the interests of disabled trans people to the CUSU LGBT+ Campaign.
  - iii) Act in the interests of trans people within the Campaign, and be a point of contact for any issue specifically related to the welfare of its trans members.
- i) The BME Officer shall:
- i) Be a member of the Campaign who is BME.
  - ii) Represent the interests of disabled BME people to the CUSU BME Campaign.
  - iii) Act in the interests of BME people within the Campaign, and be a point of contact for any issue specifically related to the welfare of its BME members.
- j) The Graduate Students' Officer shall:
- i) Be a member of the Campaign who is a graduate student.

- ii) Represent the interests of graduate students within the Campaign, and be a point of contact for any issue specifically related to the welfare of its graduate members.
  - iii) With the support of the Disabled Students' Officer, aim to have contacts within college MCRs and facilitate the creation and support of Disabled Students' Officer positions (or with any equivalent title) on each MCR.
- k) The Mature Students' Officer shall:
- i) Be a member of the Campaign who is a mature student.
  - ii) Act in the interests of mature students within the Campaign, and be a point of contact for any issue specifically related to the welfare of its mature student members.
- l) The International Students' Officer shall:
- i) Be a member of the campaign who is an international student.
  - ii) Represent the interests of disabled international students to iCUSU.
  - iii) Act in the interests of international students within the Campaign, and be a point of contact for any issue specifically related to the welfare of its mature student members.
- m) The Computing Officer shall:
- i) Maintain the Campaign website, keeping the information up-to-date and as accessible as is reasonably possible.
  - ii) Maintain the Campaign's social media outlets.
  - iii) Help facilitate technological needs of the Campaign including coordinating online access to meetings, as outlined in C. 8.
  - iv) Administer the Campaign's mailing lists.
  - v) Coordinate [cusu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:cusu.cam.ac.uk) email addresses for officers of the Campaign and other members as needed.

6. The Campaign may decide from time to time to introduce new elected officer roles in response to particular contexts and situations, by adding a clearly defined title and job description to the Standing Orders for election for as long as the role remains relevant.

7. The term of office of all Elected Officers shall be from the day after the announcement of election to office until one year and a fortnight later. The two weeks following the annual elections shall be a handover period, including ensuring close familiarity amongst all officers elect with the Campaign's Constitution and Standing Orders.

8. An elected officer shall have the right to resign at anytime during their term of office, and concerns about their fulfilment of their office can be raised at Open Meetings. It shall be understood, however, that they are all part time officers facing disablement: as long as they are keeping Open Meetings fully informed of their progress, and sending apologies to any meetings that they are unable to attend, they shall have the right to remain in office.

9. If any member of the Campaign has concerns that an Elected Officer may be conducting themselves in a way that is contrary to the aims of the Campaign, they may raise this for discussion at an Open Meeting. This should then be discussed and resolved in the same way as any other item for discussion, as outlined in the Campaign's Standing Orders.
10. Elected Officers shall coordinate their work through Open Meetings, with no separate decision-making processes, and any other meetings between them shall be purely organizational.
11. In the event of an unfilled office, the Elected Officers and the Elections Committee shall take collective responsibility for finding interested members, and facilitating their election to the position(s) through the consensus decision of a quorate Open Meeting. In the meantime, the work pertaining to unfilled roles shall be divided between the Elected Officers.
12. Any group within the Campaign shall have the right to initiate an autonomous network within it and elect a self-defining officer to facilitate it.

### E – Elections

1. All elections shall be conducted by secret ballot and counted by Single Transferable Vote (STV), in accordance with the regulations set out in the University Ordinances.
2. An Elections Committee of not less than two members of the Campaign, but as many as are interested, shall volunteer to be responsible for facilitating the elections; devising the rules; making every reasonable effort to advertise the time, date and venue of such elections to all Ordinary Members of CUSU in every college; and resolving any conflicts relating to electoral conduct.
3. The Returning Officer for the elections shall be chosen by the members of the Elections Committee from among themselves.
4. From henceforth, committee elections will take place in Lent Term. Should the constitution be subject to change in Lent term, elections should take place at the next available opportunity, which may be Easter term.
5. Nominations shall open fourteen days prior to the date of the elections, and close seven days later, at which point candidates shall be announced.
6. Only members of the Campaign shall be eligible to stand for elected positions and vote in elections.
7. Any member may run for a maximum of two roles in any one election.
8. The relevant Open Meeting of Lent Term shall include hustings, facilitated by the Elections Committee.
9. Hustings shall be made fully accessible to all members of the Campaign. If a member of the Campaign who is running for a position or positions cannot attend hustings due to their impairment(s) or disablement, a speech shall be read out on their behalf. Wherever possible, hustings shall be made accessible without requiring the physical presence of attendees.
10. Voting shall be carried out via the CUSU online voting system and an accessible ballot box at the relevant Open Meeting.



11. There shall only appear on the ballots the names of the candidates standing, the ballot rubric and a clear explanation of the criteria for membership of the Campaign.

12. Voting shall be made as accessible as possible. If a member of the Campaign has particular access needs that prevent them from voting in the procedure outlined here, access arrangements shall be made to allow them to vote.

13. Voting shall be open for at least 48 hours and no more than seven days, as decided by the Elections Committee, and votes shall be publicly counted.

#### F – Finance

1. The finances of the campaign shall be as transparent as possible, with the executive committee held accountable for their expenditure of the budget.

2. The Campaigns' accounts shall be managed by an appointed representative at the direction of Open Meetings, who shall liaise with the CUSU coordinator and follow CUSU internal policy.

#### G – CUSU

1. The Campaign shall be a Representative Campaign of CUSU, as laid out in the CUSU Constitution, Article I. The Disabled Students' Officer shall represent the interests of the Campaign on the CUSU Executive, and at CUSU Council. The Disabled Students' Officer is accountable to Open Meetings for their votes at CUSU Council. They shall act as a channel of communication between the Campaign and CUSU.

#### H – Amendments to the Constitution

1. The Constitution shall be the primary document governing the transaction of all Campaign business. It may only be amended by the consensus decision of a quorate Open Meeting, pending ratification by CUSU Council.

2. The Campaign's Standing Orders may be amended or added to by the decision of a quorate Open Meeting.