

## **Grand Charter of the Hampshire Student Union**

Ratified:

Last Amended:

### **Preamble:**

*The Hampshire Student Union (HSU), under the powers allocated to it by the Board of Trustees in the Purpose, Values, and Scope document (PVS), shall create and participate in the Student Government outlined below. Every student of Hampshire College is an automatic member of the Union, and this document outlines the specific groups, their relations to each other, and general procedures that shall exist, by which Union members can affect the issues outlined in PVS on the Hampshire College campus.*

### **The Structure of official bodies of the HSU shall be as follows:**

- Town Meeting
- Coordinating Board (CoordBoard)
- Scope Groups and Task Forces

#### **1. Town Meeting; Description:**

- a. Town Meeting is the power of the Hampshire Student Union. It consists of an open, inclusive and accessible all-student gathering that votes on proposals brought forward by students. It must be a frequent and organized assembly space for all members of the Union.
- b. Votes by Town meeting shall be binding and effective immediately, unless otherwise stated in the proposal. The vote is final and represents the current student voice.
- c. If proposals exceed the powers directly allocated to the HSU in PVS, they shall be considered official referendums from the HSU to the administration of Hampshire College.
  - i. Decisions made by Town Meeting will be carried out by Coordinating Board, a designated Scope Group, or an HSU Task Force, in collaboration with relevant campus offices, faculty and staff.
- d. Town Meeting shall occur no fewer than four times per semester. Dates shall be decided and advertised by CoordBoard before the semester begins.
- e. As an all-student gathering, faculty, staff and outside members of the Hampshire College community will not be welcome unless they are directly

involved in an item relevant to the Town Meeting they wish to attend, or are personally invited by Coordinating Board.

## **2. Town Meeting; Voting:**

- a. Voting will take place electronically after Town Meeting, in a ballot created by Coordinating Board. The ballot will be open at least 72 hours and should contain relevant points made in the discussion for students who could not attend to refer to. The ballot must contain a link of Town Meeting notes to be valid. There must also be spaces for comments, which are not confidential and will be distributed anonymously by Coordinating Board if deemed necessary.
- b. For a Town Meeting proposal to pass, there must be at least 30 votes in total and 60% votes in favor.
  - i. If the minimum votes are not attained, the ballot shall be re-opened and further advertised by Coordinating Board.
  - ii. The 30 vote threshold represents the approximate number of active HSU members (students in CoordBoard, Scope Groups, Task Forces and other elected positions). Thus, this ensures that the proposal is not only voted on and passed by these students.
  - iii. 60% majority votes represent the HSU's commitment to a fair decision. It ensures that polarizing, 51% majority proposals will not pass.
- c. If the proposal does not pass, the student(s) who submitted it can send an appeal to Coordinating Board for it to be reconsidered in the next Town Meeting.

## **3. Coordinating Board; Structure:**

- a. Consists of 3 At-Large Members, one Co-Coordinator of every existing Scope Group and one student from every official body that requires interaction with the HSU, such as, but not limited, to the Five College Coordinating Board and Tri-Council.
- b. The At-Large Members are elected at the last Town Meeting of the year for 1 year terms. These members must submit applications to be reviewed by the Scope Group on Accessibility and Transparency before official selection at Town Meeting. If vacancies should arise, this process will be implemented at the next available Town Meeting.
  - i. A 1 year term, for this and any other position, is to be understood as 12 months or 8 Town Meetings, whichever is shorter.

- ii. The At-Large Members will be responsible for work outside of CoordBoard meetings, such as scheduling, e-mailing, meeting note sharing, advertising, funding tasks, and other activities that fall outside from the timeframe of CoordBoard meetings.
- iii. The At-Large Members will be guaranteed a stipend at the end of each semester. The amount of the stipend will be requested by Coordinating Board to Town Meeting at the beginning of the academic year.

#### **4. Coordinating Board; Description:**

- a. CoordBoard shall be charged with organizing and facilitating Town Meeting, setting dates for all Town Meetings for the upcoming semester, communicating information and delegating tasks between the HSU bodies, and adequately advertising the events and the agendas prior to each Town Meeting. It will also serve as the point of contact for groups or individuals outside of the HSU.
- b. Town Meeting proposals will be sent to Coordinating Board. Any student or group of students can send a proposal to Coordinating Board.
  - i. Every proposal received by CoordBoard must be considered objectively and evaluated in terms of its completeness, not in terms of its relevance, value, importance, or validity.
  - ii. CoordBoard can only reject a proposal if it is clearly an act of mockery, if it violates the Hampshire College Student Handbook (NSNS), or if the student(s) submitting it do not respond to CoordBoard's requests of contact.
- c. CoordBoard shall assist Union members in the writing of formal proposals, maintaining, and running transparent and accessible voting process for Town Meeting proposals and elected positions for students in the HSU and other official Hampshire capacities.
- d. CoordBoard shall be able to use the all-campus e-mail announcement system. As the central hub of coordination for all HSU efforts, CoordBoard shall use the email for advertisement of vacancies/elections in HSU bodies, important events hosted by HSU bodies, and important announcements pertaining to all Union members.
- e. In between Town Meetings, CoordBoard shall coordinate and facilitate all HSU activities.

#### **5. Scope Groups; Description:**

- a. Scope Groups are the working bodies of the Hampshire Student Union. The Scope Groups shall be convened by CoordBoard as interim bodies of at least three students, and ratified into full power at the soonest Town Meeting.
  - i. Interim groups may begin networking and planning for future scope group activities, but may not speak on behalf of the HSU or directly bring proposals to Town Meeting.
- b. Scope Groups exist as resources for students of the Union to work with to address continuous campus issues, liaise with administration, and be used as accessible representatives and experts if an issue is to be brought before Town Meeting for an all-campus vote, or brought before an administrator or campus office.
- c. All Scope Groups shall be led by two Co-Coordinators, selected internally by the Scope Group members. For a Scope Group to be recognized as official, it must have at least two more members (total of five, including Co-Coordinators) who volunteer from the HSU. If vacancies arise, advertising for more members is to be the primary focus of the Scope Group until membership goal is attained.
- d. While any group of students, with the backing of Town Meeting, can create, dissolve or reconvene a Scope Group at any time, several tasks are instrumental to the proper functioning of the HSU, and thus are a priority to be constantly functioning groups. The instrumental Scope Groups are the Scope Group on Funding (FundCom) and Scope Group on Accessibility, Transparency and Records (Scope Group on Accessibility and Transparency).
  - i. Scope Group on Funding (FundCom): Oversees day-to-day use of the SAF and maintains SAF guidelines and procedures for larger purchases made from the SAF and Student Endowment accounts.
  - ii. Scope Group on Accessibility, Transparency, and Records (Scope Group on Accessibility and Transparency): Charged with monitoring all student government activities to ensure that they fall within the purview of the HSU PVS document, the HSU Grand Charter, individual group bylaws, and NSNS standards of conduct and non-discrimination. This group shall also maintain and advertise the standard format for proposals to be brought before Town Meeting, and keep records of all proposals that have come before Town Meeting in the past. It can remove students from positions of power by bringing proposals forward to Town Meeting.
  - iii. If the instrumental Scope Groups fail to function or are officially

dissolved for any reason, CoordBoard, Town Meeting, and other relevant campus bodies must take immediate measures to ensure they resume functioning.

- e. Other key tasks, such as, but not limited to, training student leaders, examining academic policy, liaising with the administration, ensuring a healthy Hampshire community, and examining student experiences on campus, are deemed extremely important and should always be overseen by a Scope Group, and thus accessible for students to act on when issues arise.
- f. Groups with a lesser role and responsibilities than Scope Groups, but more than gatherings of interested students, can be designated by CoordBoard, and later ratified by Town Meeting, as Task Forces of the HSU, convened to execute specific tasks.
  - i. Task Forces must specify what their purpose is, and how long they will exist in order to fulfill their purpose.
  - ii. Task Forces must go through the same recognition process as Scope Groups.
- g. Any Scope Group whose membership or leadership results in requiring extensive time commitments can request a budget for stipends at the first Town Meeting of the academic year or at the soonest Town Meeting after its official recognition. The distribution of this budget will be decided internally by the Scope Group and approved by the Scope Group on Accessibility and Transparency.

#### **6. Outside Bodies with Student Representatives:**

- a. For every official body outside of the HSU that requires interaction with the HSU through student representation, such as, but not limited, to the Five College Coordinating Board and Tri-Council, the members will be elected annually by Town Meeting. From these elected members, at least one per group must become a Coordinating Board member, as outlined previously in the Coordinating Board Structure.
  - i. If the position were to be vacated for any reason, the process will be brought back to Town Meeting.

#### **7. Transparency and Records:**

- a. CoordBoard shall maintain and follow bylaws of conduct for its own meetings and for Town Meetings.

- b. All Scope Groups shall maintain and follow bylaws of conduct of their own making.
  - i. All bylaws must cover decision-making procedures, including an amendment of bylaws clause, membership structure and responsibility guidelines, as well as anything else the groups sees fit to add.
- c. All Scope Groups shall operate under the purview of a mission statement drafted by CoordBoard and/or the acting members at their inception, and ratified at the soonest Town Meeting. Town Meeting can change or revoke the mission statements of Scope Groups at any time.
- d. Current versions of the Grand Charter, official HSU documents, Scope Group missions statements and bylaws, and all proposals brought before Town Meeting will be maintained as a coalesced tome known as the "Purple Book" at the end of every semester.
- e. A record of all proposals passed by Town Meeting for the entire history and future of the HSU shall be maintained in a "Orange Book".
- f. All documents, mission statements, meeting times and locations, bylaws, and meeting minutes shall be publicly viewable on Hampedia at all times.
  - i. In addition to hard copies kept by relevant HSU bodies and campus offices, electronic copies of the Purple and Orange Books shall be publicly viewable on Hampedia at all times.
- g. All meetings of HSU bodies shall be accessible and open to all HSU members, unless specifically designated not public for special circumstances in accordance with the bylaws of the group.

**8. Amendment:**

- a. This Charter shall be amendable by Town Meeting, so long as the formal process outlined in the current Charter for approving any HSU proposal is followed in order to do so.
- b. The amendment clause of this charter is not subject to amendment.