**SPEECH AND DEBATE SOCIETY**

**CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION**

The name of this organization is the Speech and Debate Society (also known as UF Speech and Debate Team). The website of the Speech and Debate Society is <http://www.cwoc.ufl.edu/debate/>.

**ARTICLE II. ORGANIZATION AFFILIATION**

As outlined in the RSO Classification Policy, The Speech and Debate Society is considered a University Sponsored Student Organization. As a USSO, this organization is considered an extension of the university unit William and Grace Dial Center for Speech and Communication Studies, and operates within the scope and function of it. As such, The Speech and Debate Society is governed by and under the jurisdiction of internal University policies, standards, and business practices as well as gains access to exclusive university resources through our sponsoring University unit. University-sponsored student organizations are not eligible for Student Government funding.

**ARTICLE III. PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Speech and Debate Society is to provide all University of Florida students the opportunity to enhance their education through speech and debate activities that include holding organizational meetings and social gatherings, competition in intercollegiate speech and debate tournaments, and campus and community involvement including but not limited to hosting public debate events and showcases, providing communication training, and participating in community service.

**ARTICLE IV. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT & UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS**

Upon approval by the Department for Student Activities and Involvement, the Speech and Debate Society shall be a registered student organization at the University of Florida. The Speech and Debate Society shall comply with all local, state, and federal laws, as well as all University of Florida regulations, policies, and procedures. Such compliance includes but is not limited to the University’s regulations related to Non-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment (including sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking), Hazing, Commercial Activity, and Student Leader Eligibility.

**Section A. Non-Discrimination**

The Speech and Debate Society agrees that it will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act. Discrimination on the basis of the protected classes described in University of Florida Regulation 1.006 (Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policies) is prohibited.

**Section B. Sexual Harassment**

The Speech and Debate Society agrees that it will not engage in any activity that is unwelcome conduct of sexual nature that creates a hostile environment. Behaviors that could create a hostile environment include sexual harassment (which could include inappropriate sexual comments), sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking and repeated instances of cyber abuse. Sexual harassment as described in University of Florida Regulation 1.006 (Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policy) is prohibited.

**Section C. Hazing**

The Speech and Debate Society agrees that it will not initiate, support, or encourage any events or situations that recklessly, by design, or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student for any purpose including but not limited to initiation or admission into or affiliation with any student group or organization. Hazing as defined in the University of Florida Regulation 1.0081 (Prohibition of Hazing; Procedures and Penalties) and 4.040 (Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code) is prohibited. If found responsible for hazing, sanctions may be imposed against the organization, its leaders and/or members.

**Section D. Responsibility to Report**

The University of Florida identifies Responsible Employees and Campus Security Authorities to support the health, safety, and wellbeing of campus. If The Speech and Debate Society becomes aware of any such conduct described in this article, they are encouraged to report it immediately to staff in Student Engagement, the Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, the University’s Title IX Coordinator, or to their Student Organization Advisor, who are identified as mandated reporters.

**Section E. Officer Eligibility**

The Speech and Debate Society understands, acknowledges, and agrees to uphold and abide by the specific minimal requirements regarding officer eligibility as defined in the Registered Student Organization Classification and Officer Eligibility Policy.

**ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this organization is open to all enrolled students at the University of Florida. Non-enrolled students, spouses, faculty, and staff are prohibited from holding membership, office, or voting powers. All members are free to leave and disassociate without fear of retribution, retaliation, or harassment.

**ARTICLE VI. BYLAWS FOR THE SPEECH AND DEBATE SOCIETY**

The Speech and Debate Society may elect to maintain separate bylaws document to outline the day-to-day operations of the organization and to clarify policies and procedures otherwise not included in the previous articles. Bylaws and/or other guiding documents may not take precedence over the requirements sent forth by local, state, and federal laws, the university of Florida’s regulations, policies, and procedures, and the Student Engagement constitution requirements. Amendments and changes may be made to the bylaws and shall be consistent with the Student Engagement approved constitution on file and student engagement’s constitution requirements. Should the organization transition leadership, all bylaws and guiding documents will be transitioned to new student organization leaders and/or advisor(s). The Speech and Debate Society agrees to provide all unaltered by laws and guiding documents and/or clarify its procedures in writing to any University of Florida student, faculty, or staff upon request.

**ARTICLE VII. STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISOR**

Each registered student organization must have an eligible student organization advisor. The student organization advisor must be a full-time, salaried faculty or staff member not on extended leave for 4 consecutive weeks or longer during their advisor term. The advisor and the William and Grace Dial Center for Speech and Communication Studies holds the responsibility to oversee the day-to-day functions and operations of The Speech and Debate Society including the management of its finances, the selection of its members, and ensuring the organization adheres to University and department policies.

The advisor and the William and Grace Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication holds the responsibility to oversee the day-to-day functions and operations of the Speech and Debate Society, including the management of its finances, the selection of its members, and ensuring the organization adheres to University and department policies. The Student Organization Advisor for the Speech and Debate Society shall be the person hired by the William and Grace Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication to be the "Director of Forensics." The Student Organization Advisor's duties shall include attending executive and general meetings, as well as advising and supporting the organization on Speech/Debate and administrative matters. The Student Organization Advisor shall retain their position as long as they are the Director of Forensics and maintain good standing. If the Director of Forensics leaves the university or relinquishes their duties, then the newly appointed Director of Forensics will serve as Student Organization Advisor for the organization. The Student Organization Advisor has a term of office of one (1) academic year to be reappointed each year.

**ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS**

Registered student organizations are required to have a minimum of a President, Treasurer, and Vice President as elected officers. These officers must abide by the Registered Student Organization Classification and Officer Eligibility Policy.

The elected officers of The Speech and Debate Team shall be President, Vice-President, and Treasurer. At no time should one person hold more than one of these positions.

**Section A. The Executive Board** – The Executive Board shall be defined as consisting of the following: President, Vice President, and Treasurer who are elected at the end of each spring semester by the active membership. Any action called for by the Executive Board must have the involvement of all Executive Board members. All officers serve one school year, which will begin at the start of summer and conclude at the end of the spring term. All officers are eligible for re-election, with no term limits. In the absence of the President, duties fall down the chain of command. The order of succession shall be as is the order below.

**Section B. President** - The President shall preside over all general body meetings, conduct organization business, and assist the advisor with organization matters. The President will also coordinate standing and temporary committees and assign Chairs for those committees as necessary.

**Section C. Vice President** - The Vice President shall preside over general body meetings and assume responsibility of conducting organization business in the absence of the President. The Vice President shall coordinate community and campus activities. The Vice President shall be responsible for representing the organization in any meetings where representation is deemed necessary or important by the Executive Board.

**Section D. Treasurer** - The Treasurer will be responsible for all organization documentation, including but not limited to, member contact information, meeting minutes, and recording weekly meeting attendance for the purpose of determining active membership. The Treasurer shall also assist the Director of Forensics with fund-raising and bookkeeping related to team activities.

**Section E. Chair Positions** - Temporary chair positions may be established by the organization President with advisement from the Executive Board. All chair positions shall be appointed by the Executive Board. These chair positions shall be dissolved at the end of the spring term. The President is responsible for putting out a call for applications and candidates should send applications to the President. It is recommended that candidates be returning members (but is not required) and should not already hold a position on the Executive Board. The Executive Board will choose the best qualified candidate for each of the positions by a majority vote. Removal from chair positions shall be done by two-thirds Executive Board vote. As appointed positions, these chairs have no voting power at Executive Board meetings. Committee Chairs may include ones for Alumni Affairs and Public Relations. All chairs must remain active during their service. Failure to fulfill active membership requirements can be considered grounds for removal.

**Section F. Impeachment Process** - Should any member of the Executive Board be accused of being delinquent of duties, an impeachment process must proceed in the following manner:

Part 1: A group of at least five (5) active members shall call for an impeachment

hearing before the Executive Board.

Part 2: During the impeachment hearing at the next scheduled general meeting, only one person shall offer testimony against the accused, followed by a defense of the accused, which may be presented by the accused personally or through a representative.

Part 3: If any member of the Executive Board shall find just cause for an impeachment, that member shall call for an impeachment vote to be held at the meeting following the meeting at which the announcement of the vote is made.

Part 4: A two-thirds vote of the active membership shall be required for the removal of office. This vote concludes the impeachment process.

**Section G. Officer Vacancies**

Part 1: In the case of a vacancy of the Presidency, the Vice President will become President and a special election for the Vice President will take place the meeting following the one (1) week at which nominations are made and two (2) weeks following the vacancy.

Part 2: In the case of a vacancy of any office other than President, the office in question shall be filled by special election to take place the meeting following the one (1) week of nominations that are made and two (2) weeks following the vacancy. Active membership, to vote or run, for a special election shall be determined by the previous semester.

**ARTICLE IX. ELECTIONS**

In the absence of clear direction on election, amendment, and /or voting procedures, The Speech and Debate Society agrees to follow the guidance and instruction of Robert's Rules of Order for the election or amendment process.

**Section A.** Elections will be held during the final general business meeting of the spring semester. The two (2) meetings prior to the election will be reserved for nominations only. During these two (2) meetings the President will open the floor for nominations in the following order: President, Vice President, Treasurer. Active members may verbally nominate desired candidates, including self-nominations, during this time and their nomination must then be verbally seconded by another active member to be validated. The nominated candidate must then accept or decline the nomination. The following week, the names of previously nominated candidates will be read to the assembly of active members present and the floor will again be opened for a final round of verbal nominations.

**Section B.** Voting for President, Vice President and Treasurer shall be reserved for all members active during the Spring Term. Any member expected to graduate at the conclusion of the spring term shall remain eligible to vote in the election.

**Section C.** During the election, the order of the vote shall be as follows: President, Vice President, Treasurer. Each nominee will be given the opportunity to speak and present their ideas about holding said office. Following the candidate’s speech, the floor will be opened for questions from the general body. After the conclusion of the question/answer period, the candidate will leave the room. Additionally, a round of discussion will follow the candidates’ speeches and question/answer period. Time limits for speeches, question/answer periods, and discussions will be determined by the President. Voting shall be conducted by secret ballot. Ballots shall be collected and counted by the standing President together with the organization’s advisor. Down-slating will be permitted. No proxy voting shall be allowed unless in the case of an absence due to a religious event, scheduled class or exam, medical emergency, or other University approved excuse. Documentation will be required at least 24 hours in advance. The absentee voter is responsible for sending their ballot to the President prior to the time ballots are counted. The method of voting will be decided upon by the President. Each non-absentee vote must be done in person at the time of the vote. In the event of a tie, a run-off will take place between the two candidates with the highest number of votes. If there are only two candidates running (including a run-off), the President (for the position of President, Vice President, and Treasurer) must withhold their vote until ballots are counted. The President may then cast their vote only to break a tie. Candidates who receive the highest number of votes will be sworn into office at the conclusion of the spring semester.

**ARTICLE X. FINANCE**

As a University Sponsored Student Organization, The Speech and Debate Society does not receive any funding or resources from Student Government, rather, this organization is eligible to be funded by the William and Grace Dial Center for Speech and Communication Studies and/or:

**Section A.** There will be no membership dues. Additional costs may be incurred by organization members who choose to be involved with specific activities and travel/competition. Activities may include extraneous costs associated with traveling to state, regional and national tournaments including but not limited to food, lodging, and other travel costs.

**Section B.** Funding-raising efforts are performed by the organization advisor in conjunction with UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Development Officers. Any funds obtained from these endeavors are deposited into a general account with the UF Foundation for use with student travel expenses, T-shirts, and expenses incurred with public debates (including rental charges, catering, marketing, and public relations).

As a USSO, The Speech and Debate Society will comply with UF Finance and Accounting policies on purchasing, funding and fundraising.

**ARTICLE XI. DISSOLUTION OF ORGANIZATION**

Upon dissolution, student organizations are prohibited from leaving their organizational assets to any individual or any other student organization. Rather, student organizations may designate a specific charity that will receive such organizational assets. At the time of dissolution, after all outstanding debts are paid, The Speech and Debate Team will leave any assets and outstanding funds to The William and Grace Dial Center for Speech and Communication Studies.

If at any time the members of the organization feel that dissolution should be discussed, an email must be sent to both the president and the organization advisor three days before the general body meeting where the movement is to be discussed to ensure time is allotted for debate and voting. Discussion of the movement should take no longer than 10 minutes and should be immediately followed by a vote from the membership on the movement. For the movement for dissolution to pass, three fourths of all active members must vote to dissolve the organization. Should the Speech and Debate Society dissolve, The Dial Center for Speech and Communication Studies has the right to close out all remaining debts.

**ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

Student Engagement has established a process through which constitutions may be amended, reviewed, and approved. Student organizations wishing to amend their constitutions must utilize their constitution on file listed on GatorConnect to make amendments and submit those changes to Student Engagement.

All amended constitutions must be submitted directly to Student Engagement for review and approval.

Section A. Amendments shall be presented to the executive board. The executive board will determine if such an amendment shall be deemed relevant by the board. If an endorsement is made, the amendment must pass two (2) consecutive readings before a quorum of the active members by a two-thirds vote. If the amendment passes both the first and second reading, it shall be added to the constitution. If the amendment fails either the first or second reading, it shall be considered dead.

Section B. In either the first or second reading, a vote may be made to send the amendment back to the executive board for a re-writing. This vote may not be made once the amendment has failed a reading and thus should be made prior to a vote in favor of or opposed to the amendment.

Section C: Eligibility to vote on amendments must be determined by active membership in the previous semester (fall for spring amendments and previous spring for fall amendments), for students who are still enrolled at the University of Florida.

Section D: Upon amending the constitution, it will immediately be submitted directly to the Department of Student Activities and Involvement for review and approval.