



The Constitution and Bylaws of *Students of Caribbean & African Ancestry (SOCA)*

I Organization Name

1. The official name of the organization shall be “**SFU Students of Caribbean & African Ancestry (SOCA)**”. No other name shall be used in the advertising or representation of the organization.

II Purposes and Aims

The objectives of the organization are:

- To initiate and maintain fellowship between students of Black, African and Caribbean descent and students interested in the varied Black, African and Caribbean cultures;
- To promote and raise awareness of the relevant social and political issues significant to people of Black, African and Caribbean Descent on campus and abroad;
- To support and advocate primarily on behalf of members, providing services and promoting Afrocentric intellectual and cultural experiences through open and interactive exchange of ideas among members of the university community;
- To provide the SFU community with relevant academic and human resources on Africa and the Caribbean and other Afro-descendant communities
- To promote the relevance of the Afro-descendant community to other student associations, as well as national and international organizations.
- To serve as an umbrella organization for Affiliate Sub-Associations such as nationality-based African and Caribbean clubs on campus.

III Values

SOCA’s values are:

▪ **COMMUNITY BUILDING:**

SOCA is committed to creating a strong sense of community among members such that the presence of togetherness is strong, creating a safe space for the community and providing resources to the membership. Via having social and community events, discussions, workshops and various other activities to the collective benefit of the Black community and allies.

▪ **REPRESENTATION:**

SOCA is committed to advocating for representation in faculty/academia/governance and advocating for Black Presence in the University and Government Policy. ▪

INCLUSIVITY:

SOCA is committed to creating an inclusive space for people to belong without fear of condemnation based on sex, gender, ethnicity, race, class or sexual orientation. ▪

SOCIAL JUSTICE:

SOCA is committed to social justice and advocating for fairness in social and economic policy such that inequities and systemic barriers are reduced, and fair policy decisions are made to redress issues facing the Black Community via redistribution of wealth and privileges inside and outside the SFU Community.



IV Membership and Constituents

1. SOCA's constituents are all self-identified Black, African and Caribbean Descent students at SFU and FIC. Membership shall be open to SFU students in good standing with the Simon Fraser Student Society who are SOCA constituents, and allies.
2. Membership can also be open to non-student individuals such as staff, faculty, alumni or community members, hereby known as Associate Members. If any restrictions are to be placed on these associate members they must be noted, and are subject to approval. "Associate Members" may not run or vote for executive positions.
3. From time to time, the current executives may unanimously decide to reject the approval or to not approve some persons who are eligible to be members if in the reasonable opinion of the executive, the person does not have the group's interest at heart while determining suitability and the person's level of commitment to the organization's overall goals (taking into account safety of current members and governance), unless current members by at least $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote of quorum at a membership meeting determine otherwise to overrule the said non-approval.
4. A member may be expelled by a vote of at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of quorum for matters the Membership find particularly egregious and appalling. The duration of the penalty must be determined before the expulsion vote is conducted. An expelled member has the right to appeal, and may rejoin if $\frac{2}{3}$ of quorum vote to permit this. An expelled member may not run for election during their penalty of expulsion. If a member who is being considered for expulsion is an Executive, the impeachment proceedings outlined in the 'Executive Participation' section of this Constitution and Bylaws shall take precedence, then an expulsion vote may occur afterwards.

V Executive

1. The Executive shall include at least a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. 2.

All members of the Executive must be student members of the organization.

3. All members of the Executive shall be voted into their positions via an election or by-election. For single nomination positions, a yes/no vote shall be held. If a vacancy should occur on the Executive, the Executive may appoint an interim officer until the next meeting of the membership when a member may be elected by Membership in a byelection, as an Acting Executive Officer.
4. Responsibilities of the Executive members are as follows:
 - 4.1 **President:** shall conduct all executive or general meetings; shall provide strategic focus for the objectives of the organization; represent the organization to Simon Fraser Student Society and the University administrative body and other committees that require a representative of the Association; shall co-ordinate all organization activities; is ex-officio member of all committees within the organization; is responsible for

promoting the organization to the campus community; In the event that the executive wishes to elect multiple presidents, the title will reflect that of Co-President; *write an annual report on all activities done in the*



organization for the past year and a continuity report for the next executive member who will fill this position.

- 4.2 **Vice President:** With the president, shall provide strategic focus for the objectives of the organization; shall assist the president in all duties; shall be a temporary replacement for a member of the Executive, if/when the member is unable to complete his/her duties or term; shall jointly oversee alongside the Secretary, access to Association's assets and resources, particularly the Association office and all Association resources maintained therein; shall work closely with the President to create comprehensive recruitment strategies for the augmentation of an enthusiastic membership.
- 4.3 **External Relations Officer:** shall represent Association objectives to independent organizations and associations; this role may be delegated to another executive or member from time to time (eg. Shall represent the organization on a collective of organizations or designate a suitable representative from the executive or membership); shall co-ordinate correspondence between the Association and external sponsors, organizations and associations; shall liaise with Internal Relations Officer concerning communiqués of relevance to general membership; shall liaise with Information Technology Officer to ensure relevant information is posted on the official Association website; shall be in charge of the external distribution of promotional materials prior to official Association events.
- 4.4 **Internal Relations Officer:** shall represent Association objectives to on-campus organizations and associations, this role may be delegated to another executive or member from time to time (eg. Shall represent the organization on a student society representative body such SFSS Council or, recommend that the executive designate a suitable alternative representative from the executive or membership); shall co-ordinate correspondence between the Association and internal sponsors, organizations and associations; shall liaise with External Relations Officer concerning communiqués of relevance to general membership; shall liaise with Information Technology Officer to ensure relevant information is posted on the official Association website; shall oversee the internal distribution of promotional materials prior to official Association events.
- 4.5 **Secretary:** shall record and maintain the records of Executive and General meetings; shall maintain a membership list and records of membership presence at all meetings; shall maintain the association's poster boards in

accordance with the directions of the Executive; shall jointly oversee alongside the Vice President, access to Association's assets and resources, particularly the Association office and all Association resources maintained therein; shall prepare and present



regular reports of organization activities to the general membership and oversees all general communiqués within the Association.

- 4.6 **Treasurer:** shall maintain a record of the allocation of Association funds for the duration of his/her tenure, specifically an account of funds received and spent; shall maintain a detailed record of the Association's assets and liabilities, including all materials either purchased by or on loan to the Association; shall prepare a draft budget ahead of the next semester based on proposed functions and events to be undertaken.
 - 4.7 **Information Technology Officer:** shall oversee the operation and development of the Association website and social media; shall formulate and oversee technological initiatives which effectively support the Association objectives; shall assist the Executive Committee on all supplementary aspects which require the intricate knowledge of Information Technology systems and social media.
 - 4.8 **Events Coordinator:** shall be responsible for the planning and organizing of the association's events; shall liaise with External & Internal Relations Officer concerning upcoming and potential sponsorships for proposed events; shall liaise with the executive body concerning upcoming & potential events; shall be the primary contact person for all events.
 - 4.9 **Exec-at-Large:** Shall take on responsibilities that fit within his or her capabilities and time constraints; It is not mandatory that the Exec-at-large have a specific portfolio; In the event that the Exec-At-Large has a specific portfolio, the name of the position may be renamed to be in accordance to the roles of the portfolio, for example, a First Year Representative; The Exec-at-large may be an Elected or an Appointed position; The Exec-at-large must work as a member of the executive towards achieving the goals and vision of SOCA; The Exec-at-large is a voting member of the executive, except in the case where s/he is a new member, and in that case, must be in the position of Exec-at-large for a minimum probationary period of one semester. Appointment as a voting member of the executive may only be approved at the end of the probationary semester by a unanimous vote of the Executive.
5. **Executive Participation:** Executive members are expected to participate in the business of the association and the Executive Committee, including attending events, Membership meetings and Executive meetings. Executive members are expected to give advance notice of absence from meetings.

When an (Executive member is absent without notice from two consecutive meetings (Executive or general), or does not otherwise actively participate in the business of the Executive and the association for a period of two months, it is appropriate for the



President to approach the Executive member to confirm his/her desire to resign in recognition of his/her inability to fulfill an Executive function, or may choose to reconfirm his/her intent to continue in office by attending meetings and participating in the business of the Executive and the association.

An **inactive** Executive member who has verbally confirmed his/her intent to continue in office, but who does not undertake or resume attendance at meetings or participation in Executive business within one month, may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Executive and will be notified of removal via email. This shall be considered as an abandonment of the office.

If in the opinion of the Membership, the President or any other Executive have consistently shown gross neglect for duties or have egregiously been failing to do the duties outlined in this constitution with a disregard to the membership or rest of the executive, the Membership may initiate impeachment proceedings (“impeachment” defined as removal from an elected office) proceedings by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of quorum present and voting, then a first discussion on impeachment held at the next meeting - notice must be given prior to the discussion via the mailing list. Then, at the following meeting, a second and final discussion and a subsequent vote of impeachment at that meeting is held - notice must be given prior to this meeting via the mailing list as well. The final vote on the impeachment requires a majority vote of quorum present and voting. An impeached Executive member shall never be eligible to run for a position in a future election for the Executive. They reserve the right to continue membership, unless they are expelled from membership in a separate vote.

6. *Affiliate Sub-Associations:* SOCA serves as an umbrella group for all Affiliate Sub-Associations; Affiliate Sub-Associations are clubs or associations formed as a sub-club of SOCA where all membership is shared with SOCA via automatic or manual enrolment; Affiliate Sub-Associations may refer to but not limited to Nation-based Student Associations from the Various African and Caribbean countries; Affiliate Sub-Associations should be set up in the database at the SFSS; SOCA advocates for the interests of all affiliate sub-associations; Sub-Associations may raise issues relating to the associations to the SOCA Executive; Members of Sub-Associations may be on any committee of SOCA; A list of all Sub-Associations must be in the records of SOCA and maintained by the Secretary; A representative from the Executive of each Affiliate Sub-Association may serve on the SOCA Executive as an Executive or as an Exec-At-Large as the representative to that Affiliate Sub-Association.

7. *Conflict of Interest:* A member of the SOCA Executive shall not hold a position on the executive of another club or association for which there may be a conflict of interest. In the event that this happens, the member will be asked to resign from

his/her position on the SOCA Executive. The current executive must unanimously agree on what is designated as a conflict of interest.



VI Meetings

1. Clubs and organizations must decide on a quorum, i.e. the minimum number of executives and members necessary to conduct official business.
2. The Students of Caribbean & African Ancestry quorum is the lesser of 5 members (including 2 executive members), or 2 Executive and 30% of signed membership.
3. At least one general meeting must be called per semester. Meetings to conduct business of the organization are preferably general meetings. If an emergency meeting is required or only members of the executive are available, the agenda, date and time for this executive meeting shall be sent out to membership via email and the executive meeting be conducted. The quorum for an executive meeting shall be the lesser of, 5 or 50% of the executive. If assembling members is difficult, business can be conducted over electronic mail which must be unanimously approved by all Execs.
4. Meeting Agendas should be well posted in advance using electronic mail, website, posters, etc.
5. Minutes shall be recorded for all meetings.

VII Elections and by-elections

1. Executives of SOCA must be elected from and by the membership with a majority vote.
An election must be held at least once per year.
2. Elections will take place in March of each academic year.
3. Call for nominations shall be made prior to any election – nominations will be vetted for suitability by a Nominating Committee who will determine the candidate's level of commitment to the organization's overall goals, and approved to run accordingly. The Nominations Committee shall be composed of between 2 to 5 members, who shall be ineligible to run in elections in which they are overseeing. The Nominating Committee must make every reasonable and sustained effort to ensure that at least one candidate is recruited for every vacant position - including communication of changing vacancies to candidates throughout the nominating period as necessary. The Nominating Committee shall oversee the conduct and operation of SOCA election and must abide by the constitution and bylaws and any such policies or documents established by Membership. If the timelines and integrity of elections may be threatened and there is an absence of guidance to determine how to deal with certain unexpected issues, the Nominating committee may democratically draft interim elections guidelines, and communicate them to candidates or prospective candidates and, if necessary, decide how to address those specific issues during the election in a manner that does not conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws or any Policies of SOCA established by Membership.
4. The results of elections are sent to SFSS and recorded in the SFSS Registration sheet.
5. Executive positions can be held by any student member of the organization.
6. Votes may be cast by secret ballot or a simple show of hands. Majority vote wins. In case of a tie, the chair casts the deciding vote, or the member with the least votes

drops out and votes are recast.

7. If for any reason an executive position becomes vacant, a by-election for that position will be held. By-elections may be held at any-time, preferably in the Fall Semester for any vacant position. This is not required if less than one month is left before the next



- scheduled election; instead, a member may be appointed to the position by the Executives. The SFSS General Office must be notified of Executive changes. 8. An Exec-at-large position might be appointed by Membership upon recommendation of the President and Vice President in consultation with the Executive and Membership. One or more Exec-at-large positions may be elected positions aligning with regular election periods.
9. There must be at least two week's advance notice of all elections or by-elections voting. Such notice must be sent to the membership mailing list, and shall be advertised on social media and the website. The Notice should include at least the Call for Nominations period and the Voting period of such election; or, if it is that an in-meeting election or in-meeting by-election, the notice shall include the Call for Nominations period, and the meeting date, time, and location where voting is being held.

VIII Amendments

1. There shall be two readings of any proposed amendments to the constitution, and a vote be conducted at the meeting where the Second Reading is done, or a vote be done at a later meeting.
2. Notice of the First Reading of the proposed amendments to the constitution shall be presented via email to the active membership in advance, prior to the meeting in which the amendments will be discussed and the first reading be conducted.
3. Notice of the Second Reading and Subsequent Vote of the proposed amendments to the constitution shall be presented via email to the active membership in advance, prior to the meeting where the second reading and the vote shall be conducted.
4. Amendments to this constitution require a 2/3-majority vote of quorum. 5. Upon receiving 2/3 affirmative votes in favor of amendment/revision, an executive member shall submit the new constitution to the SFSS General Office for approval.

IX Dissolution

1. This organization will be dissolved if the quorum at a Membership meeting unanimously votes to do so. A motion for dissolution must be preceded by advance notice of and two discussions at two separate meetings prior to a dissolution vote.
2. In the event of SOCA dissolution, all non-donated assets in possession of SOCA shall be held, in secure trust, for three (3) years under the direction of the SFSS Board Within this period of three (3) year period, the SFSS should continuously entertain applications to seek a re-establishment of a SOCA; or, after at least a three (3) year period, in line with the SOCA x SFSS LOA, shall seek the redirection of the assets to other organized Black student groups to succeed SOCA in the enjoyment of the assets held, and in order to re-establish a Black student constituency group with the stated objectives and constituents of SOCA, in which event, any dedicated levy funds shall be redirected by a referendum of the SFSS membership.
3. Any and all assets acquired by SOCA through donation by third parties or fundraising shall



X Agency

1. SOCA is not an agent of the SFSS and the organization’s views and actions do not necessarily represent the voice of the SFSS.

XI Special Policies (if you have any additional policies, please write them here) 1. The Executive body of the Association must have a fair representation of both indigenous and diasporic Africans and Caribbeans in the Association.

2. The Executive Committee should be composed of members who have a serious interest in providing a well-organized and knowledgeable focal point as leaders of the organization.
3. Regular attendance of meetings and Association functions is expected, with exception to extenuating circumstances.
4. The President **MUST** be a descendant of one of the varied Black African or Caribbean races or ethnicities.
5. The holders and signees of the association’s bank account(s) must be the **President**, the **Vice-President**, **Treasurer/ Financial Officer**, and the **Secretary**. Transactions will need to be authorized/signed by any 2 of the indicated signees. SOCA’s staff support may be delegated as signee from time to time during yearly turnovers.
6. A SOCA Volunteer Manual should be created and maintained by Membership.
7. All Changes to any Policies, Manuals, Contracts, MOUs, or Letters of Agreements shall be approved by Membership (unless in the case of a contract from time to time - power to approve specifically delegated to the Executive for a short and defined period)
8. SOCA shall guide the BSSC operations & staff support as outlined in the SFSSxSOCA LOA

SPECIAL COMMITTEES.

1. A Special Committee may be appointed by the Executive to perform a task of unusual significance to the Association (eg. Cultural Events Committee, Social Justice Committee, SOCA BSSC/Space Committee, Parties Committee, etc)
2. A member of the Executive Committee or Membership shall be appointed by the President to be liaison for or oversee the Special Committee. His/Her duties in this regard are to delegate tasks and report with progress or other relevant information to the Executive and Membership.

This Constitution and Bylaws has been adopted by: “SFU Students of Caribbean & African Ancestry (SOCA):”

On: _____ **of:** _____,

President: _____,

Signature Date

Other Executive Member: _____, _____
Signature Date