

# **SJTI STUDENT BODY CONSTITUTION 2005**

## Contents

*Acknowledgements*

*Foreword*

*Preamble*

SECTION ONE:	Name and Membership
SECTION TWO:	The Composition of the Forum
SECTION THREE:	The Forum
Object and Functions	
SECTION FOUR:	The Executive
Object and Functions	
SECTION FIVE:	The Committee of Coordinators
Object and Functions	
SECTION SIX:	Members of the Forum and their functions
A. The Executive	
6.1	The President
6.2	The Vice-President
6.3	The Treasurer
6.4	The Secretary
6.5	The Community Animator
B. The Year-group Representatives	
C. The Representative of the Committee of Coordinators	
SECTION SEVEN:	Sub-Committees and Societies
The Entertainment Committee	
The Sports Council	
The Publicity Committee	
SECTION EIGHT:	Election Procedures
A. The Executive	
B. The Year-group Representatives	
C. Committees	
•	The Entertainment Committee
•	The Publicity Committee
•	The Sports Coordinator
SECTION NINE:	Terms of Office
SECTION TEN:	General Meetings and Quorum
A. General Meeting	
B. Quorum	
SECTION ELEVEN:	Responsibilities of the Students
SECTION TWELVE:	Amendments and Review

## **PREAMBLE**

Whereas we respect the rights of all people and are committed to the promotion of justice and peace;

Whereas the integrity of our training envisages the Church's mission in the world;

Whereas our studying, working and, praying together and recreation in the spirit of mutual trust, service and understanding with one another is non-exceptional in the Institute;

Whereas our Christian witness, and services to the people of Africa and of the Universal Church, wherever we may be *missioned* is a human duty as well as the Church's mission;

Whereas we feel drawn to redefining our purpose of service and the Church's mission as we endeavour to make Christ alive in the light of our faith and calling as religious men and woman, clergy and lay people;

Whereas we seek the training that promises hope and credible service and witness to both the people and the Church in Africa and the Universal Church;

We, the students of the St. Joseph's Theological Institute hereafter known as the SJTI, therefore declare that we commit ourselves to the establishment and maintenance of student structures, and parameters that will empower us to more effectively realize these hopes and aspirations. These structures and parameters are subject to the approval of the authorities of the SJTI, and in no way challenge the autonomy of any group(s), community, or society of students. We shall strive to manifest a spirit of mutual respect, consultation and cooperation through these structures and parameters.

### **SECTION ONE: Name and membership**

1.1 The full name of the body shall be: The Student Body of the St. Joseph's Theological Institute, referred to hereafter as the Student Body.

1.2 The affairs of the Student Body shall be run by a student structure known as: The Student Forum, referred to hereafter as the Forum.

1.3 The Forum shall be assisted by a committee known as: The Committee of Coordinators, whose composition and functions will be described in section 5 below. The Committee of Coordinators will function as a collaborative wing of the Student Forum.

1.4 Every student registered at the SJTI shall be a member of the Student Body forthwith, and shall only cease to be so when he or she ceases to be a registered student at the Institute.

1.5 Every student registered at the SJTI shall be issued with a Student Identity card and a General Prospectus and have access to the SJTI Student Body Constitutions. In addition, every student should also be issued with the SJTI Student Body Constitution.

## **SECTION TWO: The Composition of the Forum**

2.1 The Forum shall consist of the following members:

- a) Five members of the Executive
  - The President
  - The Vice-President
  - The Community Animator
  - The Secretary
  - The Treasurer
- b) The Year Group representatives, each representative being elected by the students registered that year.
- c) One representative of the Committee of Coordinators being elected according to the procedure decided by the Committee of Coordinators.
  - i) This committee shall be made up of coordinators or representatives of every group, society, or community.
  - ii) The smaller group(s) or community(s) of 4 or less members may decide to combine and choose one coordinator or representative. All respective religious congregations and groups are to be represented regardless of constituting number of members. Members of smaller religious congregations or groups, who are hosted by larger ones, are to have their own, independent representation. Private students are to be of special consideration under this section.

## **SECTION THREE: The Forum**

### **Object and Functions**

3.1 The Forum makes decisions on behalf of the Student Body, representing that body in matters of common interest.

3.2 The Forum conducts negotiations with the Institute authorities.

3.3 The Forum summons, determines the agenda of, and conducts General Meetings of the Student Body. There are two statutory General Meetings during the academic year and the other during the third term of the academic year. The one during the third term of the academic year is for the election of the new Executive. The Forum can summon extraordinary general meetings of the student body if and only if at least seven members of the Forum agree on the need for such a meeting. The agenda for such meetings is to be sent to participants in advance. A report-back meeting by the outgoing executive will be held at least a week before the election of the new executive. Class representatives are to cooperate in this regard and respective groups may put forth suggestions for the agenda of meetings to be scheduled.

3.4 The Forum makes known student opinions on all matters relating to the life of the student body.

3.5 The Forum shall promote student contact with groups outside the Institute and represent the Student Body in all matters arising outside the Institute that affect that body.

3.6 The Forum shall promote student responsibility and the interests and affairs of the Student Body. It shall foster student societies and may create appropriate sub-committees accountable to it. While the student groups are answerable to the Forum, the Forum shall maintain the exchange of information with the groups under its establishment.

3.7 The Forum is accountable to the Student Body for all its actions, since it acts in the name of the body.

3.8 The Forum should normally meet once a month, or at least twice a term upon the Executive's discretion, who would decide its agenda. Such meetings should be open to observer's (maximum of 3). An invitation of observers to such meetings shall be made to societies, movements, or groups who in turn appoint a representative observer.

3.9 Extraordinary meetings of the Forum can be called if five or more members agree on the need for such a meeting, and all members of the Forum are obliged to attend. Such a meeting should limit its discussion to the reason(s) for its being called.

3.10 Any financial arrangements outside of the approved budget (cf. 6.3a) have to be approved by the Forum.

3.11 A person can only hold one post on the Forum. If a year group representative or the representative of the Committee of Coordinators is elected to an executive post during his/her tenure, his/her constituency shall hold elections for a new representative.

## **SECTION FOUR: The Executive**

### **Object and Functions**

4.1 The principle task of the Executive is to translate the decisions and desires of the Forum into everyday student life, and to act as a means of communication between the students and the Forum.

4.2 The Executive should submit major decisions that directly affect the whole Student Body to the Forum. If this is not possible, the Executive is mandated to act on behalf of the Student Body, though it is always accountable to the Forum and will give an account of all its activities at ordinary meetings of the Forum.

4.3 The Executive will normally meet once a week and announce the time and venue of such meetings. Observers would not normally attend such meetings, but the minutes of such meetings should be made available to students of the Institute.

4.4 The Executive will call together the Forum (cf. 3.8), and whenever it is felt necessary according to a majority of the Executive (i.e. 3 or more), although such extraordinary meetings of the Forum should limit its discussion to the reason(s) for its being called. Suggestions arising from meetings are to be taken into consideration though ultimately, approval and decisions are to be passed by the Institute president and the Board of Members.

4.5 At the beginning of each academic year the Executive will be responsible for ensuring the elections of the year-group representatives and the Sports Coordinator, the Entertainment Committee, and the Publicity Committee (cf. 8.13, 16)

4.6 The Community Animator, with any member of the Executive is responsible for the forming of the committee of Coordinators (cf. 6.5).

4.7 The Executive should call the first Forum meeting of the year within a month since the commencement of the academic year.

4.8 The executive will work collaboratively with the Sports Coordinator, the Entertainment Committee, and the Publicity Committee.

## **SECTION FIVE: The Committee of Coordinators**

### **Object and Functions**

5.1 The Committee of Coordinators is a consultative body that seeks ways of fostering the community spirit of all the students at the Institute.

5.2 In particular, the committee acts as a direct channel of communication to the Forum for the different groups, clubs, societies and communities that constitute the Student Body at the SJTI.

5.3 This committee shall elect a convener who shall call meetings and summon the committee members to attend, and a representative to attend meetings of the Forum as a full member of the Forum. The convener and the representative may be the same person according to the wishes of the committee.

5.4 The committee shall liaise with the Community Animator (cf.6.5).

5.5 The internal workings of the committee are decided upon by its members.

## **SECTION SIX: Members of the Forum and their functions**

### **B. The Executive**

#### **6.1 The President**

a) The President, or the Vice-President, shall normally chair all meetings of the Student Body, the Forum and the Executive, or arrange for some other person to take the chair. The President shall have the casting vote in the case of a deadlock, or the Vice-President in the absence of the former. If both the President and the Vice-President are absent the chairperson<sup>1</sup> shall have the casting vote.

b) The President shall convene Executive meetings preferably on a weekly basis (cf. 3.3).

c) The President represents the Student Body as a whole and it is his/her task to ensure that the Student Body is represented on both the internal committees of the Institute; the SJTI Board, the Academic Council, as well as the Cluster Council, and all outside groups, where such representation may be required.

d) The President shall promote the interests of the students at all times, and in particular it is the President's task to ensure that all points coming out of student gatherings are suitably followed up.

## **6.2 The Vice-President**

a) The Vice-President shall work in collaboration with the President in the duties described above, and in the absence of the President shall assume the powers and duties of the President.

b) The Vice-President shall also be concerned with the external affairs at the Institute insofar as they concern the students as a whole. It is the particular task of the Vice-President to promote contact with outside groups and persons in any way that seems suitable and acceptable to the Student Body.

c) The Vice-President shall appoint and call a Disciplinary Committee and chair the proceeding of such convergences. He or she shall, in confidence with the committee, deal with the matters in the capacity as the Student Body

## **6.3 The Treasurer**

<sup>1</sup>The Chairperson acts as such and chairs the meeting on temporal arrangement

a) The Treasurer is the administrator of the finances of the Forum. The newly elected Treasurer will present a budget and his/her general financial arrangements to be approved by the Forum for the following academic year. This must be done before the end of the academic year in which the new Treasurer is elected.

b) All financial activities of the Forum must be approved by the Executive. The Treasurer shall keep detailed records of all financial activities that shall be made available to the Executive as well as the Student Body via the Student Manager platform, producing quarterly financial statements, and presenting detailed monthly financial reports to the Forum.

c) The Treasurer shall present a financial report to the student body at the report-back meeting held before the election of the new executive.

d) It is the particular task of the Treasurer to promote and encourage all Student Body-affiliated and registered movements, clubs and societies, and the Treasurer shall act as contact person on the Executive for all registered movements, clubs,

and societies. Distributions to such movements, clubs, and societies must be budgeted for and paid out on request, subject to the approval of the Forum.

e) The annual payment to the student publication shall be specifically budgeted for and paid out on request.

f) No loan applications shall be made to any organizations or individuals.

g) Refund for travel costs and other expenses should be requested within a month of expenditure, bearing the signature of the bursar or Superior unless personal funds have been used and a receipt is presented.

#### **6.4 The Secretary**

a) The Secretary shall take the minutes of all meetings of the Student Body, the Forum, and the Executive, or may delegate some person to take such minutes.

b) The Secretary shall ensure that records of all student gatherings are made and kept where such records would be of use to the Student Body, the Forum or the Executive.

c) The Secretary shall deal with all correspondence of the Forum and keep copies of all such correspondence. He/she will concern him/herself with the general processing of information in the Institute.

d) It is the particular task of the Secretary to ensure that all necessary notifications are made to the Student Body appropriately.

#### **6.5 The Community Animator**

a) The Community Animator, who must be a member of a community, shall liaise with the community coordinators or representatives and the Sports Coordinator, the Entertainment Committee, and the Concert Committee on all issues affecting the communal life of the Student Body, promoting and fostering a unifying spirit.

b) In particular, the Community Animator shall:

1. Convene the first meeting of the Committee of Coordinators before the end of the third week of the first term,
2. Ensure, at that meeting, that the Committee has the structures required to convene its own meetings and send one representative to the Forum,
3. Convene further meetings of the Committee of Coordinators if and only if a majority of the Executive agrees on the need (i.e. 3

or more).

- c) The Community Animator shall keep the executive informed and involved in all matters relating to the communal life of the Student Body.
- d) In the first month of each academic year, the Community Animator will call a meeting of all new students in the Institute to put up a concert. In this meeting they will conveniently structure themselves according to their needs.
- e) The Community Animator shall prepare a list of liturgical duties for each Institute liturgical service.

### **C. The Year-group Representatives**

6.6 The task of each Year-group representative is to make known to the Forum the views of the Year-group he/she represents and report back to his/her Year-group.

6.7 Each Year-group representative is expected to fulfill whatever task(s) he/she might be given by the Forum.

### **D. The Representative of the Committee of Coordinators**

6.8 His/her task is to present the views of the Committee of Coordinators to the Forum and to report back to the Committee of Coordinators.

## **SECTION SEVEN: Sub-Committees and Societies**

7.1 The principle sub-committees are:

- 1. The Entertainment Committee** consisting of three persons.
- 2. The Sports Council** consisting of the Sports Coordinator and Representatives from various sport codes<sup>2</sup>.
- 3. The Publicity Committee<sup>3</sup>** consisting of three persons.

7.2 The primary role of these committees is the promotion of the general communal life of the Student Body through their particular tasks.

7.3 These sub-committees are elected at the beginning of the year and proceed according to the discretion of their coordinator and the criteria given them by the Forum.

7.4 Each coordinator is accountable to the Student Body through the Forum.

7.5 The Community Animator is the contact person on the Executive, and therefore also on the Forum, for the Entertainment Committee, the Sports Council, and the Concert Committee.

7.6 The Executive will appoint from amongst themselves contact persons for the other sub-committees.

7.7 Other sub-committees may be formed according to the need of the Forum and proceed in collaboration with the Forum.

7.8 The Forum shall encourage the formation of student societies acceptable to the Student Body. They will be accountable to the Student Body through the Forum, insofar as their activities affect the whole Student Body. These societies are autonomous and can operate according to their program(s). The Treasurer shall be their contact person on the Executive.

7.9 Registration of these societies shall be done through the Forum to the Institute Administration. Deregistration shall follow the same channel as in registration.

7.10 Application for registration shall include a written letter, submission of the society's constitutions or similar documents.

7.11 Under the Sports Council, there is to be formed a sister-committee that will serve to work in aspects of health and which will provide officials (e.g. referees) when it comes to sporting events.

## **SECTION EIGHT: Election Procedures**

### **A. Executive**

8.1 The election of a new executive will take place in the third term at the second Statutory General Meeting of all the students.

<sup>2</sup>Sport Codes may include any provided facilities that are available. Apparently popular ones include soccer, volleyball, lawn tennis and badminton.

<sup>3</sup>The Publicity Committee may appoint the Magazine Committee and or the Outside Speakers group.

8.2 Three weeks before the day of the meeting, whose actual date will be decided upon by the out-going Executive, a form for nominations to the five Executive posts will be posted on a suitable notice board.

8.3 Each candidate will require one nominator and one seconder; their names to be entered in the provided spaces on the nomination form. Each candidate can be nominated for one post only. On the day of elections losing candidates may be nominated for posts that may be available, should they accept such nomination(s).

8.4 Nominations will be closed on some agreed time on the day before the elections, and no further nominations will be accepted after this time, with the exception of a situation that may arise as described in 8.3 above. As a resourceful measure, strict procedures shall be observed regarding nominations and campaigning. There shall be no electoral promotions one day prior to the scheduled elections. Electoral campaigning shall run up to two days prior to the elections.

8.5 The out-going Executive is to ensure that there are candidates for all five posts.

8.6 The out-going Executive will choose three Election Officers and an Election Monitor<sup>4</sup>. The Election Officers and the Election Monitor shall be appointed in time so as to prepare for those who may not be present at the General Meeting that they may vote by posting their votes.

8.7 Where Election Officers are voting members of the Student Body, the officers are not exempted from casting their votes. It is the particular task of the Election Officers to count the votes. On the other hand the Election Monitor's particular task is to diligently ensure, for the benefit of all present, that the procedures have been followed.

8.8 The order of elections for the five posts is as follows: the President, the Vice-President, the Community Animator, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.

8.9 Either the nominator, or the seconder, or the candidate may speak to the Student Body before voting takes place for that post, if some speech had not been made previously (cf. 8.3).

8.10 The Student will vote for the candidates by means of secret ballot. Those who cannot be present at the General Meeting can vote by post.

8.11 If the candidate gains a simple majority (i.e. 51%) or more of the cast votes, he or she is deemed to be elected to the post.

<sup>4</sup>Often final year students officiate at elections. The out-going Executive may ask an external team preferably from the Schools of Theology in Pietermaritzburg Cluster to conduct elections provided they are briefed on the election procedures

If no candidate receives 51% or more of the cast votes, a re-election takes place, and all those who have gained less than 20% of the votes cast are eliminated. The person with the least number of votes is always eliminated in any re-election.

8.12 A candidate for an uncontested post will be accepted by a show of hands.

## **B. The Year-group Representatives**

8.13 The Executive will oversee these elections, and in particular will ensure that they take place during the third week of the first term, and before the end of that week. The Executive, or member thereof, will negotiate with the individual Year-groups to find a suitable time when all the Year-group can be present.

8.14 The Year-group will meet at the chosen time, with at least one member of the Executive who will act as election officers, to elect its representative. Nominations will be taken at the meeting, each candidate requiring a nominator and a seconder. There will be no limit to the number of possible nominations. Once nominations have been closed, voting will take place by a show of hands.

8.15 The results will be decided in accordance with 8.11 above, and the elected Year-group representative takes up his/her duties immediately.

## **C. Committees**

- **The Entertainment Committee**
- **The Publicity Committee**
- **The Sports Coordinator**

8.16 These elections will be conducted by the Executive at the first Statutory General Meeting of all the students during the opening week of the Academic year. Nominations and election of these sub-committees, and coordinators will take place at the same meeting and the order of election will be decided upon by the Executive. Each of the three elections will proceed as follows:

- (i) The nominator of each candidate who accepts nomination will address the meeting briefly to speak on behalf of the nominee,
- (ii) The casting of votes will follow by way of secret ballot,
- (iii) In each case, the candidate with the highest number of votes will be deemed to have been elected to that post whereas the losing contender in an earlier election may be nominated for a post to be elected later.

## **Section Nine: Terms of Office**

9.1 The term of office for the Executive is one calendar-year from the date of election.

9.2 The term of office for the Year-group representative ends at the end of the academic year.

9.3 The term of office for the principle sub-committees (i.e. 7.1) end at the end of the academic year.

9.4 Any holder of office can be removed for a good reason by a 51% 'vote of no confidence' of that constituency which elected him/her. Such a vote of no confidence can be taken by any suitable means, provided the reasons are clearly indicated. The Forum will decide on any validity of any particular no-confidence vote.

9.5 Any holder of office can resign if such resignation is accepted by the Forum. A holder of office should normally tender his/her resignation in writing.

9.6 A person may hold an office for two consecutive terms of office given that he or she has been found competent and deemed worthy for the required work. The decision to accept or decline re-election is at the discretion of the individual in question. Furthermore, a person may be asked to step down if it is deemed that the person is not well equipped to fulfill the duties of the position to which he or she was elected.

9.7 Any vacancy occurring shall be filled by an immediate by-election according to the procedures set out in section 8.

9.8 Only a General Meeting can initiate a no-confidence vote against the entire Executive and/or Forum. In the case of a successful no-confidence vote, the outgoing Executive shall immediately make preparations (cf. Section 8A), a date being set by the meeting before it closes for the election of the new Executive not less than one week and not more than two weeks from the date of the no-confidence vote.

9.9 The new Executive will initiate the procedure for the election of the Year-group representatives, and a new representative from the Committee of Coordinators if the no-confidence vote affected the entire Forum. A Forum meeting must be called within two weeks of the new Executive taking up office.

## **SECTION TEN: General Meetings and Quorum**

### **A General Meeting**

10.1 There shall be two Statutory General Meetings of the Student Body, to be held on the following occasion:

- (a) Before the end of the first week of the academic year,
- (b) During the third term of the academic year.

10.2 General meetings of the Student Body shall be open to all students at the Institute. All students have the right to speak and vote at such meetings, subject to such standing orders as the Forum or the Executive may from time to time make for the conduct of the Student Body meetings.

10.3 Notice of the Statutory General Meetings and the agenda of such meetings shall be posted on a suitable board at least two days before the said meetings. Any relevant documents should be made available at the same time.

10.4 An extraordinary general meeting of the Student Body shall be called under the following circumstances:

- (a) If the President receives a request to call such a meeting together with a motion or motions which are to be put before such a meeting, signed by at least 51% of the students registered at the Institute.
- (b) If the President receives a request to call such a meeting (10.4a), signed by at least 25% of the students registered at the Institute, but less than 51% and the Executive judges it desirable to call such a meeting.
- (c) If seven or more members of the Forum judge it desirable to convene such a meeting.

10.5 Once it has been decided to call an extraordinary general meeting of the Student Body, it should be called as soon as possible, if not immediately.

10.6 At general meetings half of the number of students registered at the Institute shall constitute a quorum.

10.7 Any gathering of students whose number makes up a quorum can define itself as a General Meeting.

10.8 All resolutions taken at a General meeting require a simple majority of all members present and voting, except resolutions pertaining to amendments to the constitution, which shall require a two-thirds majority of all members present and voting.

## **B Quorum**

10.9 At least seven members of the Forum are required to constitute a quorum at any particular meeting of the Forum.

### **SECTION ELEVEN: Responsibilities of the Students**

11.1 Each member of the Student Body is expected to be faithful to his/her responsibilities towards the Student Body, both inside and outside the Institute.

11.2 Each member of the Student Body is expected, as far as possible, to attend all meetings and activities of the Student Body.

### **SECTION TWELVE: Amendments and Review**

12.1 Only a General Meeting can allow these constitutions to be amended, altered, or added to, and then if and only if two-thirds or more of those present at the meeting agree.

12.2 It will normally be the task of the Forum to periodically review all of the above structures and to act as interpreter of these constitutions in the case of questions about the meaning of a particular section. If the Forum deems it necessary, it can constitute a temporary body for the purpose of reviewing and proposing alterations to these constitutions. This temporary body shall consist of two representatives from each Year-group, and one member of the Executive.

12.3 If the Forum cannot resolve a dispute, a Board of Review can be called into being either by a meeting of the whole Student Body or by the Forum itself. The Board should consist of not less than three and not more than five students. The Board will deal with the specific task it has been created for and its decision would be final, unless its decision required an amendment, alteration or addition to these constitutions in which case 12.1 applies. The Board of Review is dissolved once its task is completed.