

# **ILASSA Constitution**

The Institute of Latin American Studies Student Association Preamble

We, the Latin Americanist students of the University of Texas at Austin, in order to facilitate and encourage the interests and activities of all students who have chosen to pursue further knowledge of Latin America; to create a campus environment which fosters an awareness of the Latin American region; and to nurture a social and intellectual climate that is conducive to the study of Latin America, do establish this constitution for the Institute of Latin American Studies Student Association.

## **ARTICLE I**

Organization of the Institute of Latin American Studies Student Association

Section 1. This body shall be "The Institute of Latin American Studies Student Association" (ILASSA).

Section 2. All students of the University of Texas at Austin pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees in Latin American studies are automatically members of ILASSA. Membership is open to any other student of the University of Texas at Austin whose research or intellectual interests pertain to Latin America; such a student may obtain membership on a semester-to-semester basis by attending at least one (1) regular ILASSA meeting.

Section 3. All rights and privileges (including voting rights) are accorded to any person who fulfills the requirements of I, 2.

Section 4. ILASSA shall consist of an ILASSA Executive Cabinet and the membership at large. ILASSA has the power to form both ad hoc and standing committees as its membership sees fit.

Section 5. As an official student organization of the University of Texas at Austin, ILASSA is bound to obey all university rules, bylaws and statutes governing student organizations.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **ILASSA Meetings**

#### **Section 1. Regular Meetings**

A. The first regular meeting of the school year shall be held within the first two (2) weeks of the start of the fall semester.

B. During the fall and spring semesters, a meeting shall be held at least once monthly at a regular time and place agreed upon by the membership. Should the time or location of a regular meeting deviate from the norm, members must be given at least twenty-four (24) hours notice via the ILASSA list-serv, with such a call noting the new time and/or locale.

C. Members of the faculty of the University of Texas at Austin and staff and alumni of the Institute of Latin American Studies shall automatically be accorded full speaking privileges (although not voting privileges) at ILASSA meetings. Should the membership wish, a simple majority vote (50% + 1) of the members assembled at a meeting may extend such speaking privileges to others.

#### **Section 2. Special Meetings**

A. A separate meeting of ILASSA, held at a time different from that of the regular meetings, may be called by the ILASSA Executive Cabinet at its discretion. Such a session must be called by the ILASSA Executive Cabinet upon receipt of a petition by at least twenty (20) ILASSA members.

B. Such call must give at least twenty-four (24) hours notice, and must include the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.

C. If the special meeting is in addition to a week's regular meeting, no business shall be transacted except that mentioned in the call. This restriction may be waived by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present.

#### **Section 3. Structure of Meetings**

A. Business at ILASSA meetings shall consist of, but not be limited to, reports from ILASSA committees and new items of business from ILASSA members. The ILASSA Executive Cabinet shall post an agenda for each meeting on the ILASSA list-serv at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to a meeting.

B. ILASSA members are empowered to introduce new items of business either prior to or during the course of a meeting. Submissions prior to a meeting will be made part of the agenda; new items of business introduced at a meeting will be addressed once all agenda items are considered. The ILASSA Executive Cabinet shall have the power to exclude items from the agenda. The ILASSA

membership may overrule such a decision with a two-thirds (2/3) vote at a meeting.

C. New items of business can consist of but are not limited to:

1. requests to form new committees,
2. presentation of information on a topic of interest to the ILASSA membership,
3. an amendment to the constitution and
4. a call for removal of an officer.

D. Any item of business (other than amendments to the constitution or votes on officer removal) requiring a vote of the ILASSA membership shall ordinarily require only a simple majority (50% + 1) to pass. A member may call for a vote to have "extraordinary significance." Should a simple majority of the membership assembled agree that the item of business merits "extraordinary significance," a two-thirds (2/3) majority is needed for the item of business to be approved.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **ILASSA Executive Cabinet and Officers**

Section 1. The Executive Cabinet shall be composed of:

A. Up to nine (9) Voting Members including:

1. the President (s)
2. the Vice President(s)
3. the Treasurer
4. the Secretary
5. the Social Committee Chair
6. the Administrative/Alumni Liaison
7. the Academic and Cultural Committee Chair
8. the Conference Coordinators (casting one vote only)
9. the Technological Support/Communication Committee Chair

Section 2. Duties

A. The President(s) shall :

1. serve as the presiding officer(s) of ILASSA and of the ILASSA Executive Cabinet,
  2. call and preside over the regular meetings of ILASSA,
  3. represent ILASSA to the administration of ILAS,
  4. coordinate student participation in new student orientation, and
  5. facilitate and promote the inclusion of new members in the organization.
- This shall include sending an e-mail at the beginning of each semester informing students of the organization and the possibility of membership. In

addition, the president shall post a sign-up sheet in or around the ILASSA lounge for such a purpose. These duties may be delegated to the secretary.

B. The Vice President(s) shall:

1. assist the President(s) in official ILASSA business,
2. coordinate and schedule the Cabildo Abierto at least once in the academic year. The Cabildo Abierto is a town hall style meeting between the students, director, and graduate advisor. The meeting will be facilitated by a third-party mediator (i.e. from the mediation clinic at the law school). The agenda will be preset by the students and submitted to the administration no later than one week prior to the meeting. The intent is to encourage greater communication between the student body and administration to address problems that concern the students,
3. stand in for the President(s) if needed, and
4. automatically assume the office of president if the President(s) leave office for any reason before the full presidential term is complete.

C. The Treasurer shall:

1. oversee and administer the budget of ILASSA and
2. shall serve on, though not necessarily chair, the Fundraising Committee for the ILASSA Conference.

D. The Secretary shall:

1. take minutes at every ILASSA meeting and post these minutes on the ILASSA list-serve(s) in a timely manner,
2. maintain a record of ILASSA's activities for posterity,
3. moderate and manage the agenda of the ILASSA meetings,
4. assist the president in facilitating and promoting the inclusion of new members in the organization, and
5. maintain a roster of the organization's membership.

E. The Social CC shall:

1. designate a weekly location for a Friday evening gathering,
2. shall suggest other social activities to the ILASSA membership,
3. organize the institutional welcome and end of the year parties,
4. shall serve on, though not necessarily chair, the Entertainment Committee for the ILASSA Conference, and
5. maintain the ILASSA Lounge in good conditions.

G. The Graduate Council Representative(s) shall:

1. attend meetings of the Graduate Council and summarize the events of these meetings to the ILASSA memberships at regular meetings.

H. The Technological Support/Communication Committee Chair shall:

1. maintain the ILASSA list-serve(s) and ensure that its regulations and rules of conduct are observed and

2. maintain the ILASSA website.

I. The Cultural and Academic Committee shall:

1. organize activities with faculty and visiting professors at UT on Latin American issues that are considered relevant,  
2. encourage and plan all cultural activities that are related to Latin America, and

3. coordinate activities with other organizations in the University that organize events on Latin American culture.

J. The Administrative/Alumni Liaison shall:

1. attend the administrative meeting of LLILAS in the fall as a representative of ILASSA,  
2. report the happenings of that meeting to the membership,  
3. organize an alumni outreach committee to (including but not restricted to):  
    a. update and maintain the Alumni Network portion of the LLILAS website  
    b. schedule alumni to participate in job talk panels  
    c. match alumni and students to establish mentor relationships  
    d. publish an Alumni Newsletter,  
4. oversee all alumni projects, and  
5. work with the designated LLILAS staff on Alumni Outreach

Section 3. Proxies

A. Should any officer be unable to fill his/her duties on a temporary basis, he/she may designate a proxy to serve in his/her place for a duration of no longer than month at any one time. After a month, the officer will be considered to have resigned his/her position, and an election to fill the position will be held at the next regular meeting.

B. The Vice-President(s) is/are the automatic proxy(ies) of the President(s). However, the membership has the ability to appoint another proxy via a vote by the membership.

## **ARTICLE IV**

Elections, Terms of Office and Removal

Section 1. Procedures for Elections

A. Dates:

1. All offices other than that of the President(s), Secretary, Technological Support/ Communication Committee Chair, and Administrative/Alumni Liaison will be filled at the second meeting of the fall semester.  
2. The office of the President(s) will be filled at the final meeting of the fall

semester.

**B. Rules and Procedures:**

1. All officers shall be selected by a simple majority (50% + 1) vote of at least 25 members. Should three or more persons run for the same office and no one person gain a simple majority in the first round of voting, a run-off between the two highest vote-getters of the first round will be held to determine the winner.
2. Voting will be done over the ILASSA membership list serve.

**C. The Electorate**

1. All students who are members of ILASSA, as defined in Article I, Section 2, shall be eligible to vote for ILASSA Officers.

**Section 2. Terms of Office**

**A. The President(s):** Shall begin at the final meeting of the fall semester and continue until the final meeting of the fall semester in the next year.

**B. The Technological Support/Communication Committee Chair as well as the Administrative/Alumni Liaison:** Shall begin at the first meeting of the spring semester and continue through the final meeting of the fall semester in the next academic year. With regard to the Technological Support and Communication Committee Chair, former office holders are strongly encouraged to provide training throughout the spring semester, if needed.

**C. The ILASSA Conference Chair:** Two of the chairs shall be elected in the spring semester, following that year's conference. The third shall be selected by those two chairs from a pool of applicants from the entering class of students in August.

**D. The Secretary:** Shall begin at the first meeting of the spring semester and shall continue through the final meeting of the fall semester in the next academic year.

**E. Other Officers:** Shall begin at the first meeting of the fall semester and continue until the first meeting of the fall semester in the next year.

**ARTICLE V**

**ILASSA Committees.**

**Section 1.** In addition to the standing committees of the ILASSA Conference, which shall be detailed in the ILASSA Conference Constitution, any ILASSA member may at any time seek to create a new standing or ad hoc committee to address any issue of import to the ILASSA membership.

**Section 2.** Standing committees are permanent committees intended to endure indefinitely; ad hoc committees are those charged with a specific goal and are

intended to disband when the goal is achieved.

Section 3. Once a committee is created, the membership of the committee may choose to select its leader for the Committee Chair and conduct its business in any manner not inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the ILASSA Constitution.

Section 4. Should a dispute over leadership or the nature of the business of the committee emerge, the ILASSA Executive Cabinet shall have the authority to mediate a settlement. The judgment of the ILASSA Executive Cabinet may be overturned by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of twenty (20) ILASSA members.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Amendments**

Section 1. Once the constitution has been adopted, any ILASSA member may suggest an amendment to the constitution at any time.

Section 2. Amendments must receive prior notice and be read at an ILASSA meeting and be posted on the ILASSA list-serve at least one week before a vote on the amendment is taken.

Section 3. Constitutional amendments must receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of twenty-five (25) ILASSA members in order to pass.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **ILASSA Conference Standard Operating Procedures Manual**

Section 1. The Standard Operating Procedures Manual shall not in any way conflict with the Constitution of ILASSA and shall include, at minimum, descriptions of the duties for each of the conference committees (fundraising, logistics, abstracts, hospitality, entertainment, speakers, and any other such committee deemed necessary by the coordinators or executive committee). The manual shall be updated at least once a year following the ILASSA conference.