RSO Constitution — Master of Design Student Association (MDSA)

Student Organization Name: Master of Design Student Association (MDSA)
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Approved by (LEAD Center Staff): TBD

ARTICLE I — NAME
Master of Design Student Association (MDSA)

ARTICLE II — PURPOSE
The Berkeley Master of Design Student Association (MDSA) is the official organization representing students in the Master of Design (MDes) program at UC Berkeley. The MDSA plays an essential role in the MDes program, acting as the collective voice of the student body and shaping the program’s strategy and direction. Its activities encompass all facets of the student experience, including but not limited to academics, social life, career development, and extracurriculars. The MDSA advocates for student interests regarding program administration and resources, coordinates all activities that require a joint student-administration effort, and organizes its own student-initiated programs and events. Finally and most importantly, the MDSA strives to ensure that every student can participate fully and authentically in the MDes community.

ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP
Only currently registered students, faculty, and staff may be active members in a registered student organization. Only active members may vote or hold office.

Any full-time MDes students that are part of the incoming cohort are eligible to become active members of the MDSA executive board. Elected officers are voted in through an anonymous ballot by peers in their cohort. Meanwhile, student staff are hired by the MDSA administrators (MDes faculty and associated staff) and are paid positions.

All MDSA executive board alumni are able to continue their participation through associate membership, in which they can attend sponsored events and help with fundraising.

We will not haze according to California State Law.

We will not restrict membership based upon race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (including pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (including membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services).
ARTICLE IV — OFFICERS & ELECTIONS

There are three categories of membership positions in the MDSA executive board:

- Elected officers (MDes students)
  - Cohort Lead
  - Academic Officer
  - Studio Officer
  - Community & Culture Officer
  - Career & Alumni Officer
  - Admissions Officer
  - Administrative Officer

- Student staff positions (MDes students, hired and paid)
  - Creative Catalysts
  - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (DEIB) Lead

- Administration roles (MDes faculty and associated staff)
  - MDes Leadership
  - Student Services Officer

Each MDSA executive board has a 14-month tenure, from October to December in the following year. The general timeline is as follows:

- 1st week of October: Candidate Registration Form opens
- 2nd week of October: Voter’s Guide is released to the eligible cohort
- 3rd week of October: Voting Ballot opens and votes are submitted
- 4th week of October: Results are shared and the new executive board is announced
- November - December: the new executive board shadows the current board
  - The outgoing board still holds ultimate decision-making abilities, but the new board is expected to contribute and collaborate as co-leaders
- January - December: the new executive board takes the lead and carries out its duties
  - The new board now holds ultimate decision-making abilities, but the outgoing board may choose to stay involved as collaborators and advisors

The MDSA Executive Board members will be selected through an anonymous choice vote by the MDes student body. The election process is overseen by the outgoing MDSA board, led by the Administrative Officer and with the assistance of MDes staff. The outgoing Administrative Officer is responsible for preparing and releasing the: Candidate Registration Form, Voter’s Guide, Voting Ballot, and Results.

MDes students can nominate themselves or peers to become MDSA executive board candidates by submitting a candidate statement of up to 200 words, describing their interest and fit for the position, and their plans if elected. The registration period starts in the second week of September and will be announced via email by the Administrative Officer. Prospective MDSA candidates must submit their statements the Friday before the Voter’s Guide is released. The
candidate statement submission process will be provided via a digital document format and will be overseen by the Administrative Officer with the assistance of MDes staff.

Students can register as a candidate for multiple officer positions but must submit a separate statement for each and can only be elected to one. If a candidate receives the highest number of votes for multiple positions, they would be appointed to the position that they received the most votes for. If the candidate received an equal number of highest votes for multiple positions or if two candidates received an equal number of votes, then the MDes administration, in consultation with the outgoing MDSA executive board, would decide which position the candidate would fill, based on guidelines for candidate fit and demographic balance and representation.

At least two-thirds of the eligible cohort must submit votes in order for the results to be valid. If this level of participation is not reached by the end of the voting period, the voting period may be extended for another week. If there are still not enough votes, the election process will be restarted, including candidate nominations.

If there is a tie in the number of votes for an elected officer position, a re-vote will be cast for those positions only after a forum is held where the candidates can elaborate on their statements for five minutes each.

If, later on in the school year, some person(s) become interested in an unfilled position, they should approach the MDSA executive board. The Administrative Officer will work with the MDes leadership team to send out an email within 5 business days notifying the eligible cohort about any interested parties. If there is only one candidate, they will automatically fill the requested position. Otherwise, if there are multiple interested parties, candidate statements will be requested and an election for that position will be held within 5 business days after the statements are collected.

Once elected, officers may be removed through one of two processes:

1) If the officer desires to be removed from office due to extenuating circumstances or feels unable to perform their duties, they will be required to write a letter to the MDSA executive board stating their resignation.

2) If another member of the MDSA executive board feels like an officer is unable to perform their duties, that member may motion to vote on removing the officer from their position at the upcoming board meeting. The officer in question will be given 5 minutes (if present) to defend themselves and state their case. To successfully remove an officer, 3/4s of all present members in the meeting must vote to remove them from the board.

If an MDSA executive board position is vacated early (e.g. if an officer steps down or is removed by vote), a special election will be held for a replacement.

**ARTICLE V — MEETINGS**
The organization will meet once a month, called by the Cohort Lead. In the Cohort Lead’s absence, the Administrative Officer will call the meeting. Additionally, a general member meeting will be held at least once a semester in a “town hall” fashion.

Quorum is 50% of all active MDSA executive board members.

The process for determining when a special emergency meeting is necessary requires a MDSA executive board member to propose an urgent set of reasons by email and Slack to the other members. This must be done with at least 72 hours notice, and quorum for special emergency meetings is 25% attendance.

ARTICLE VI — CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
Any active members can propose an amendment.

Amendments are proposed in writing to the executive board, with the current section of the constitution and their proposed amendment and their proposed amendment underneath, outlining changes and why the amendment should be made.

A final vote will be made at the meeting falling two weeks after the amendment is proposed.

Active members will be notified of the vote for an amendment and reasons for amending the constitution one week prior to the meeting in which the amendment will be voted upon.

All amendments will need a 3/5 majority vote from MDSA membership to pass. Members who choose not to attend meetings in which amendments will be voted on waive their right to vote on the amendment unless they send an email 24 hours in advance of the meeting with their excuse and a request to vote on the amendment. If this happens, the excused member must attach to the email a document with the amendment and their vote either in favour or not in favour of the amendment.

All amendments, additions or deletions to this document must be filed with the LEAD Center at lead@berkeley.edu, or LEAD Center at 432 Eshleman Hall.

ARTICLE VII — DISSOLUTION
Dissolution will begin with a discussion by all MDSA officers at an emergency committee meeting called by email from an executive committee officer. To continue with dissolution, 3/5 of all officers must vote to approve dissolution. If this happens, an email will be sent out to all active members 3 days in advance of the meeting, letting all active members know that dissolution will be voted upon at the following meeting. At the meeting, the executive committee officer who called the emergency officer meeting must introduce the proposed dissolution and give the reasoning behind it, as discussed in the emergency officer meeting. Then, a motion must be made to dissolve the organisation, which will be voted upon by all present active members.
3 out of 5 of all present members must vote to successfully dissolve the organisation.

If the organization is ASUC or GA Sponsor, all unspent ASUC funds shall return to the ASUC; All Graduate Assembly funds shall return to the Graduate Assembly. If the organisation is defunct for five (5) or more years, and private obtained funds (including and funds left miscellaneous accounts) shall be donated to the following nonprofit organisation: Master of Design Student Association (MDSA). In the event that the designated nonprofits organization no longer exists or has ceased to be a non-profit, then the unspent funds shall be donated to the ASUC.

ARTICLE VIII — UNCERTAIN SITUATIONS
All points not covered in this constitution will be handled according to Robert's Rules of Order. Under Robert’s Rules of Orders, the Cohort Lead is to act as the Chair. Participation and deliberation of the majority is key to creating a democratic and fair organisation, which accurately represents the will of its members.

AMENDMENTS
1. The inaugural MDSA executive board of the SP22 cohort will only serve a 9-month tenure from April 2021 to December 2021 due to the delayed start from COVID-19 and subsequent two-semester overlap with the second cohort of MDes students. MDSA executive boards, starting from the FA22 cohort, will serve the typical 14-month tenure from October to December (of the following year) moving forward.