



COLUMBIA JOURNALISM SCHOOL STUDENT GOVERNMENT

CONSTITUTION OF THE  
COLUMBIA JOURNALISM SCHOOL  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT (CJSSG),  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM,  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF  
NEW YORK

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## **PREAMBLE**

We, the student body of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism School (hereafter “CJS”), form the Columbia Journalism School Student Government (hereafter “CJSSG”) to improve the student experience and support the management and development of CJS. We ordain and establish this Constitution for the Columbia Journalism School Student Government (hereafter, “Constitution”). This Constitution supersedes all prior constitutions, by-laws, regulations, guidelines, affiliations and other similar documents relating to the matters contained herein.

## **ARTICLE I. NAME, OFFICE, DURATION**

**Section 1.1 Name.** CJSSG represents all enrolled students at CJS. CJSSG commits itself to upholding and exercising the principles of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and responsibility, to ensure that its mission and objectives reflect the demands of the CJS student body. CJSSG practices prudence in reporting financial and non-financial information about its activities and upholds transparency in its manner of exercising its duties to the student body, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and all other related entities as directed by the rules outlined in this Constitution.

**Section 1.2 Principle Headquarters.** The principal headquarters of CJSSG is the Toni Stabile Student Center located within Columbia University’s Pulitzer Hall. A designated space for closed-door meetings will be booked in Pulitzer Hall each semester for standing meetings.

**Section 1.3 Duration.** CJSSG is a permanent organization, without an ending term.

## **ARTICLE II. OBJECTIVES**

**Section 2.1 Purpose.** CJSSG exists to address the interests and concerns of CJS students by providing direct student representation in the creation of policy and programming to further those interests and execute such operations, as outlined in this Constitution. CJSSG strives to improve the student experience and partner with the administration and faculty to support the management and development of CJS by:

- I. Representing the student body to the CJS administration, CJS faculty, CJS alumni, the wider Columbia community, and other related entities as necessary;
- II. Promoting student opinion and interests in the formulation of CJS’ strategy and goals;
- III. Formulating CJSSG’s objectives in the areas of academic affairs, alumni relations, career development, communication, diversity, external relations, library operations, social affairs, student life, and Pulitzer Hall operations and development;

IV. Achieving the aforementioned objectives through programming, advocacy, and policy support.

### **ARTICLE III. COMPOSITION**

**Section 3.1 CJSSG.** The CJSSG is composed of CJS students who serve as the “Executive Board,” the “Functional Chairs,” the “Program Representatives,” and “CJSSG Members.” This unit is hereafter referred to together as the “CJSSG” and as further described in Sections 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 hereof respectively.

**Section 3.2 General Board.** The General Board oversees the execution of CJSSG activities and priorities. It consists of the Executive Board, the Functional Chairs, and the Program Representatives.

**Section 3.3 Executive Board.** The Executive Board manages and administers the core functions and activities of CJSSG’s operations as outlined in this Constitution. The Executive Board ensures accountability for the performance of CJSSG and develops the vision for that year's class.

The Executive Board consists of the: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, University Senator, and a non-voting Parliamentarian. The Executive Board’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- I. Setting and executing the overall strategy for CJSSG;
- II. Receiving and evaluating proposals brought to CJSSG by members of the General Board and Committees, to which they provide oversight;
- III. Offer instruction and implementation guidelines on the direction of such aforementioned proposals;
- IV. Take all reasonable steps to ensure CJSSG conducts its business in a transparent and accountable manner;
- V. Meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs on a monthly basis;
- VI. Meeting with the CJS Dean once a month during a given semester; and
- VII. For those purposes, all other powers not enumerated are granted to and executed by the Executive Board.

**Section 3.4 Functional Chairs.** The Functional Chairs develop, oversee, and execute CJSSG’s programmatic functions within their respective scope of authority while ensuring the functioning of its committees. Additionally, They provide oversight of CJS administration and implement strategies set in conjunction with the Executive Board and the Program Representatives.

Functional Chairs consist of the: Academic Affairs Chair; Communications Chair, External Relations Chair; and Student Affairs Chair.

**Section 3.5 Program Representatives.** The Program Representatives' mandates derive from their respective programs. On the General Board, the objective and purpose of Program Representatives include representing their respective programs, serving on committees, and advising the Executive Board. Program Representatives consist of a single student chosen internally within the: Master of Science (M.S.), M.S. Data Journalism, M.S. Part-Time Program, Master of Arts (M.A.), Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), and in-resident fellowship programs.

**Section 3.6 CJSSG Members.** Any CJS student may serve as a general member. These individuals aid in executing the vision of the committees to which they contribute. A general member may volunteer on as many committees as they choose. At the start of each academic year, student organizations are asked to designate at least one representative of their organization as a general member.

**Section 3.7 Adviser.** The CJS administration will appoint a non-voting Adviser who is an alumnus of CJS and is not employed within the administration. Along with providing situational advice, the Adviser will provide institutional memory, budget support, and help administer CJSSG elections. The Adviser may ask or be invited to join any meeting, pending approval by the president or the relevant committee chair. In the event that the Parliamentarian is unable to fill their duties, the Adviser will assume those responsibilities until the position is filled. The Adviser may be removed from their position, pending a vote of no confidence by the CJSSG General Board.

## **ARTICLE IV. STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION**

**Section 4.1 Composition.** Annually, the student body elects each Officer of the Executive Board, aside from the Parliamentarian who is chosen by the Executive Board via self-nomination. Program Representatives are elected, selected, or nominated internally through each of the programs, in accordance with the stipulations of their respective programs. Upon election of the Executive Board, students may self-nominate for Functional Chair positions and the Parliamentarian role. If multiple nominations are received for the same Chair, the Executive Board will vote within itself to choose a nominee.

**Section 4.2 Position Terms.** All members of the General Board must serve for a full academic year, both the Spring and Fall semesters. Members of the Executive Board can not serve as student officers of other student groups in any capacity throughout their CJSSG term.

**Section 4.3 Mandates.** Each elected representative adheres to the following mandates:

#### The President:

- I. Upholds and maintains the integrity of this Constitution while leading CJSSG's internal and external affairs and remaining accountable to the Executive Board, the General Board, and the greater CJSSG;
- II. Presides over and manages all CJSSG, General Board, and Executive Board Meetings;
- III. Serves as CJSSG's representative to the CJS administration, except when designees are appointed in accordance with the terms of this Constitution;
- IV. Advises and communicates regularly with the Dean of Administrative Affairs and Chief Administrative Officer on student initiatives and concerns, relaying that office's activities to CJSSG and collaborating as needed;
- V. Convenes and presides over all open student meetings; and
- VI. Determines the scope and terms, in conjunction with the Executive Board, of discussion, debate, and resolution in relation to the transaction of all CJSSG meetings.

#### The Vice President:

- I. Assists the President in discharging their aforementioned duties as well as collaborating with the President to implement their respective mandates in accordance with the Constitution;
- II. Represents the entire CJS student body and acts as the President's deputy, including as the bonafide acting head of the Executive Board, General Board, and CJSSG in the absence of the President; and
- III. Takes chief responsibility for advancing matters pertaining to Academic Affairs to improve the student experience.

#### The University Senator:

- I. Represents the CJS student body to the Columbia University Senate — empowered and governed by its by-laws, statutes, and rules — and directly represents and is primarily and directly accountable to the CJS student body in all matters affecting CJS that are before or fall within the purview of the University Senate;
- II. Serves on the University Senate Student Affairs Committee and another committee(s) of their choosing as designated by the University Senate;
- III. Serves as an active voting member of the Executive Board, General Board, and CJSSG;
- IV. Serves as Chair for the ad-hoc Constitutional Review Committee, which body is further described in Section 8.1;
- V. Serves as the Chair for the ad-hoc Referendum Review Committee, which body is further described in Section 9.3; and
- VI. Oversees CJS-wide issues and constitutional matters, including referendum processes and preparing constitutional resolutions and amendments.

The Secretary:

- I. Serves as Chief Information and Communications officer for CJSSG business;
- II. Ensures that CJSSG rules are enforced, in conjunction with the Parliamentarian, and ensures that due process is maintained in the transaction of all CJSSG business;
- III. Acts as a notary for CJSSG and keeps all CJSSG documents updated and electronically available to students — CJSSG documents include but are not limited to: attendance, agendas, calendar, financial reports, minutes, procedure documents, and any resolutions passed by the CJSSG;
- IV. Disseminates all Executive Board, General Board, and CJSSG meeting agendas, including minutes from the previous week as well as an agenda with allotted times for each agenda item; and
- V. Provides access to resolutions, debates, financial decisions, and any other information deemed reasonably important to the student body.

The Treasurer:

- I. Serves as the Chief Financial Officer and Financial Advisor to CJSSG;
- II. Presents the state of CJSSG's budget to the Executive Board, the General Board, and CJSSG periodically and as necessary;
- III. Delivers financial reports in coordination with the Secretary to the CJSSG student body and coordinates with the Dean's Office;
- IV. Maintains financial accounts;
- V. Organizes and facilitates CJSSG's fundraising activities; and
- VI. Coordinates with committees on events and fundraising, including merchandise sales.

The Parliamentarian:

- I. Ensures the recording of institutional memory, tracking past precedent, and ensuring year-to-year continuity;
- II. Ensures constitutional compliance;
- III. Advises Executive Board;
- IV. Assists Treasurer in maintaining CJSSG accounts;
- V. Refrains from voting; and
- VI. Oversees yearly leadership transition.

The Academic Affairs Chair:

- I. Chairs the Academic Affairs Committee and oversees its regular functioning in conjunction with the Vice President;
- II. Develops and carries out CJSSG's academic objectives while promoting relations with CJS Faculty;

- III. Advises and communicates regularly with the Dean of Academic Affairs on student initiatives and concerns, relaying that office's activities to CJSSG and collaborating as needed;
- IV. Advises and communicates regularly with the Dean of Faculty Affairs & Human Resources on student initiatives and concerns, relaying that office's activities to CJSSG and collaborating as needed;
- V. Serves the student body by advocating for desired educational offerings as well as faculty and adjunct faculty recruitment; and
- VI. Maintains relationships with CJS' centers, programs, fellowships, services, and other operations to advance student interest and report on those organizations' activities.

The Communications Chair:

- I. Chairs the Communications Committee and oversees its regular functioning in conjunction with the Secretary;
- II. Develops and carries out CJSSG's communications objectives;
- III. Advises and communicates regularly with the Department of Communications on student initiatives and concerns, relaying that office's activities to CJSSG and collaborating as needed;
- IV. Serves as the point officer for communications, branding, and marketing matters of CJSSG, working to advance the initiatives of other committees;
- V. Works with the Secretary to disseminate all communications to the student body, including e-mail, social media networks, and other forms of electronic communication, as well as event publicity;
- VI. Maintains CJSSG's online presence (campus activities, social media, statements, etc.); and
- VII. Advises and communicates regularly with the Journalism Library and supports student concerns and efforts pertaining to its usage.

The External Relations Chair:

- I. Chairs the External Relations Committee and oversee its regular functioning in conjunction with the University Senator;
- II. Develops and carries out CJSSG's career development, alumni relations, and industry networking objectives;
- III. Promotes collaboration between CJSSG and the respective student governing organizations of Columbia University's schools and colleges as well as other university entities.
- IV. Advises and communicates regularly with the Dean of Career Services on student initiatives and concerns, relaying that office's activities to CJSSG and collaborating as needed.

V. Advises and communicates regularly with the Director of Alumni Relations on student initiatives and concerns, relaying that office's activities to CJSSG and collaborating as needed; and

VI. Advises and communicates regularly with the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid on student initiatives and concerns; relaying that office's activities to CJSSG and collaborating as needed.

The Student Affairs Chair:

I. Chairs the Student Affairs Committee and oversee its regular functioning in conjunction with the President;

II. Develops and executes CJSSG's student and social life objectives, overseeing and executing CJSSG's social programming, in accordance with student needs, priorities, and preferences;

III. Advises and communicates regularly with the Dean of Student Affairs on student initiatives and concerns, relaying that office's activities to CJSSG and collaborating as needed;

IV. Advises and communicates regularly with the Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion on student initiatives and concerns, relaying that office's activities to CJSSG and collaborating as needed;

V. Coordinates fundraising and social events, not limited to CJSSG parties, merchandise sales, and other revenue strategies in collaboration with the Treasurer.

VI. Regularly engages with student organizations and the overall CJS community to determine CJSSG needs and shape programming.

The Program Representatives:

I. Keep their constituency informed of CJSSG affairs;

II. Attend CJSSG meetings and relay meeting activities;

III. Integrate their students into the CJS community;

IV. Bring any appropriate program matters to CJSSG's attention; and

V. Advise the Executive Board and shape Committee activities

CJSSG Members:

I. Attend CJSSG meetings and vote on CJSSG-wide objectives;

II. Serve and work on committees; and

III. Shape committee work and voice student body concerns.

## ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES

**Section 5.1 Ad-hoc Committees.** In order to carry out its mandate, the General Board may from time to time resolve to establish ad-hoc or temporary committees. Such committees may be

resolved and composed as the General Board sees fit but must include at least one Executive Board member. Any CJSSG member is free to join a committee to which they are not assigned. Ad-hoc committees are automatically dissolved at the end of each CJSSG term.

**Section 5.2 Permanent Committees.** In order to carry out its core mandates, the Constitution establishes a number of permanent committees. Any CJSSG member is free to join a committee to which they are not assigned unless committee membership is otherwise outlined. CJSSG is comprised of the following standing committees:

### **Election Committee**

See Elections Section 7.5

### **Budget Committee**

The Budget Committee is co-chaired by the Treasurer and President. Its voting membership is composed of the Treasurer, the President, and three to five additional members of CJSSG determined by members who volunteer and are selected by the co-chairs.

The Budget Committee:

- I. Meets with the Dean of Student Affairs at the onset of the academic year to determine the programming budget for CJSSG.
- II. Sets spending priorities for CJSSG, in consultation with the Executive Board;
- III. Receives spending and revenue proposals and programming requests each semester and is responsible for approving them in accordance with CJSSG's established spending priorities for the semester, in coordination with the Executive Board, allocating based on:
  - i. Financial responsibility
  - ii. Semester plans
  - iii. Budget breakdown
- VI. Holds responsibility for the implementation and continuation of budget rollover in collaboration with the Dean of Student Affairs;
- VIII. In the case where these aforementioned duties and responsibilities cannot be completed by the Budget Committee, the Treasurer has full executive and singular authority, pending the explicit approval of the Dean of Student Affairs, to execute the necessary function of the Budget Committee.

### **Academic Affairs Committee**

The Academic Affairs Committee works to ensure academic collaboration between CJS students, CJS leadership, CJS faculty, and CJS programs. The purpose of the committee is for students and CJSSG to have a chance to provide input toward the formulation and modification of education policies before they are executed by CJS leadership.

The Academic Affairs Committee is co-chaired by the Academic Affairs Chair and the Vice President. Its voting membership is composed of the Academic Affairs Chair, the Vice President, and three to seven additional members of CJSSG determined by members who volunteer and will be selected by the co-chairs.

The Academic Affairs Committee:

- I. Seeks an array of opinions and members to represent the interests and diversity of the CJS student body to help shape academic offerings and programming;
- II. Meets regularly with the Office of Academic Affairs to give voice to student concerns and ensure ongoing dialogue;
- III. Meets regularly with faculty leadership to give voice to student concerns and ensure ongoing dialogue;
- IV. Represents student voice when supporting the Office of Academic Affairs and faculty in initiatives, including curriculum reviews, faculty hiring, etc.; and
- V. Maintains relationships and advocates for student concerns with CJS' centers, programs, fellowships, services, and other entities.

The terms governing the functioning, scope, and membership of the Academic Affairs Committee shall be further developed and modified, as necessary, jointly by CJSSG.

### **Communications Committee**

The Communications Committee works to maintain CJSSG records and convey its activities to CJS students, alumni, faculty, staff, administration, and outsiders. It works alongside the Department of Communication to advance shared initiatives.

The Communications Committee is co-chaired by the Communications Chair and the Secretary. Its voting membership is composed of the Communications Chair, the Secretary, and three to seven additional members of CJSSG determined by members who volunteer and will be selected by the co-chairs.

The Communications Committee:

- I. Promotes events, advertises meetings, and facilitates the dissemination of any other knowledge pertaining to CJSSG affairs to the CJS student body;
- II. Collaborates with the Department of Communication to craft programming that fosters relations between CJS students and outside entities;
- III. Assists in maintaining CJS' online presence and advancing its digital strategy;
- IV. Works alongside other committees to ensure the successful execution of their operations;
- V. Aids in the upkeep of CJSSG records and materials; and

VI. Supports student concerns and efforts pertaining to the usage and interactions with the Journalism Library.

The terms governing the functioning, scope, and membership of the Communications Committee shall be further developed and modified, as necessary, jointly by CJSSG.

### **External Relations Committee**

The External Relations Committee works to foster relationships between the CJS student body and alumni, industry professionals, greater Columbia University, and other entities. This committee advises and works alongside the Office of Career Services, the Office of Alumni Relations, and the Office of Admissions.

The External Relations Committee is co-chaired by the External Relations Chair and the University Senator. Its voting membership is composed of the External Relations Chair, the University Senator, and three to seven additional members of CJSSG determined by members who volunteer and will be selected by the co-chairs.

The External Relations Committee:

- I. Supports efforts to build relationships between the CJS student body and alumni, industry professionals, greater Columbia University, and other entities.
- II. Supports efforts to aid in career advancement and networking;
- III. Collaborates with the Office of Career Services to craft programming and opportunities that advance joint ideals;
- IV. Collaborates with the Office of Alumni Relations to craft programming and opportunities that advance joint ideals; and
- V. Collaborates with the Office of Admissions to craft programming and opportunities that advance joint ideals.

The terms governing the functioning, scope, and membership of the External Relations Committee shall be further developed and modified, as necessary, jointly by CJSSG.

### **Student Affairs Committee**

The Student Affairs Committee serves as the principal committee responsible for the benefit and well-being of student life at CJS, including but not limited to social events, fundraising, and wellness. It principally focuses on social life programming while also ensuring the centering of the student experience in programming around professional, academic, development, and other opportunities.

The Student Affairs Committee is co-chaired by the Student Affairs Chair and the President. Its voting membership is composed of the Student Affairs Chair, the President, and three to seven

additional members of CJSSG determined by members who volunteer and will be selected by the co-chairs.

#### The Student Affairs Committee

- I. Organizes CJS social engagements and fundraising activities;
- II. Supports the student body in handling concerns;
- III. Collaborates with the Office of Student Affairs to craft programming and opportunities that advance joint ideals;
- IV. Collaborates with the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion to craft programming and opportunities that advance joint ideals; and
- IV. Communicates and collaborates with student organizations and other committees to advance shared initiatives.

The terms governing the functioning, scope, and membership of the Student Affairs Committee shall be further developed and modified, as necessary, jointly by CJSSG.

### **ARTICLE VI. PROCEDURE**

**Section 6.1 CJSSG Meetings.** All CJSSG are open to members of the CJS community but only CJSSG members are allowed to speak unless they yield their time to a guest. The President retains the right to initiate any closed discussion or vote within the course of a meeting; however, they may be overruled by a majority vote. The Executive Board may choose to conduct this meeting as a Town Hall, whereby non-members may ask questions. CJSSG-wide meetings are held every six weeks at a fixed time, decided by the membership following elections. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each meeting. If an agenda item takes longer to deliberate than expected, non-urgent items will occur at the next meeting

**Section 6.2 General Board Meetings.** All meetings of the General Board are open to CJSSG members but only General Board members are allowed to speak unless they yield their time to a guest. The President retains the right to initiate any closed discussion or vote within the course of a meeting; however, they may be overruled by a majority vote of the Board. General Board meetings are held, at minimum, during the first week of the month at a fixed time, decided by membership following elections. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each meeting. If an agenda item takes longer to deliberate than expected, non-urgent items will occur at the next meeting

**Section 6.3 Executive Board Meetings.** All meetings of the Executive Board are open to the General Board but only Executive Board members are allowed to speak unless they yield their time to a guest. The President retains the right to initiate any closed discussion or vote within the course of a meeting; however, they may be overruled by a majority vote of the Board. Executive

Board meetings are to be held at minimum biweekly at a fixed time, decided by membership following elections. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each meeting. If an agenda item takes longer to deliberate than expected, non-urgent items will occur at the next meeting

**Section 6.4 Committee Meetings.** All Committee Meetings are open to the public but only CJSSG members are allowed to speak unless they yield their time to a guest. The co-chairs retain the right to initiate any closed discussion or vote within the course of a meeting; however, they may be overruled by a majority vote of the committee's voting members. Committee meetings are to be held at minimum biweekly at a fixed time that does not interfere with the Executive Board meeting, decided by the board following elections. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each meeting. If an agenda item takes longer to deliberate than expected, non-urgent items will occur at the next meeting.

**Section 6.5 Meetings Format and Structure.** Meetings are guided by the Chair's discretion in an informal manner. Each CJSSG Officer has one vote. In the case of a tie, the measure supported by the President is selected. In cases where more order and decorum are deemed necessary by the Chair or by majority vote of the body, meetings may be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

**Section 6.6 Online Meetings and Voting.** Online meetings and voting may occur if a measure is raised and discussed during regular meetings and a quorum has been reached. The President or Committee Co-Chairs may request 48 hours in advance to move a meeting online, at which point members will vote online to confirm that decision. A time period for online votes must be announced ahead of the vote and closed in an appropriate and expedient manner without extension.

**Section 6.7 Attendance Policy.** Four consecutive/unexcused absences or six excused absences in one semester are grounds for dismissal. The member in question will have the opportunity to state the reason they have been perpetually absent and explain how they have been contributing to CJSSG despite their lack of attendance. The General Board may then hold a vote on whether they feel the member should retain their rights as a member of CJSSG. Absences may be excused at the discretion of the Secretary or respective committee chair. Grounds for excused absences include but are not limited to illness, extreme academic circumstances, work, family/personal emergencies, or other unavoidable personal conflicts. Replacement of an excused member falls under Section 6.10.

**Section 6.8 Official Business.** All official business requires a quorum. Quorum is defined as the participation of at least two-thirds of the voting membership of that respective body.

**Section 6.9 Resolutions and Decisions.** The passage of all CJSSG resolutions and decisions

requires a simple majority of all CJSSG voting officers, aside from constitutional amendments, provided quorum as defined in Section 6.1 has been established.

**Section 6.10 Dismissals.** Any CJSSG member may file articles of impeachment. Any dismissals of a CJSSG officer require a two-thirds majority of all CJSSG voting Officers, provided a quorum has been established. Voting on dismissals of CJSSG Officers requires the participation of all officers of the Executive Board; however, an impeached officer (Executive or General) may not participate in voting. Dismissal proceedings are overseen by the President. In the case where the President is impeached, the University Senator runs the proceedings. If dismissal proceedings are brought to the General Board, the party raising dismissal and the accused party are both given an opportunity to state their cases. The accused party is asked to leave the proceeding prior to voting. Dismissal votes are held in an open vote amongst the CJSSG.

**Section 6.11 Replacements.** In the event that the President is unable to serve the duration of their term due to resignation or dismissal, the Vice President assumes the position and serves as President for the remainder of the term of office

In the event that a CJSSG Officer is unable to serve the duration of their term due to resignation or dismissal, the General Board votes to decide whether to fill the position with a replacement. In the event that the General Board decides to replace a vacant position, the Executive Board determines and establishes special eligibility, candidacy, and voting rules for such replacements. CJSSG will conduct a vote thereafter.

In the event a CJSSG officer is still an active student, but not on the Manhattan campus and cannot fulfill their duties, the General Board may vote to decide whether to fill the position with a replacement. If the officer serves on the Executive Board, the Executive Board determines if the vacancy should be filled. If they decide to fill the vacancy, they may nominate a member of the General Board to fill the position for the remainder of their term. The General Board will conduct a vote thereafter.

**Section 6.12 Transition.** CJSSG members must conduct a thorough and quality-driven handover with incoming CJSSG representatives to ensure Institutional Memory. Handover preparation must include, at minimum, a one-page transition document. This document must report on the activity and status of all CJSSG committees. Members of the prior year's Executive Board are expected to hold a transition meeting with the current year's newly-elected Executive Board. The Parliamentarian will oversee the transition process alongside the Adviser.

## **ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS**

**Section 7.1 Eligibility.** All students who expect to be enrolled at CJS for the duration of their

relevant CJSSG term are eligible to run for office in the CJSSG General Election. All students who meet this requirement are eligible to run for any Executive Board position or submit a nomination for a Functional Chair position or the role of Parliamentarian. Program Representatives are elected, selected, or nominated internally through their programs, in accordance with the stipulations of their respective programs.

**Section 7.2 Suffrage.** All enrolled CJS students, including those in special programs, are eligible to vote in the CJSSG General Election.

**Section 7.3 Election of Officers.** The CJSSG Officers are elected by a vote of eligible students. All enrolled CJSSG students are eligible to vote. Those persons who receive the highest number of votes for each of the contested positions are deemed to have been elected to said position. Candidates may run for only one position at a time.

The CJSSG General Election has a single ballot or online vote for all Executive Board positions. For all positions, those candidates who receive the highest number of votes corresponding to the number of vacancies announced are deemed to have been elected. If there are no candidates contesting for specific positions or in case of a vacant position anytime during the term, active students of CJS are invited to apply through official communication channels. Candidates applying for the position are invited to submit a two-minute speech to the CJS student body. All CJS students vote to choose among candidates. In the case of a single applicant, voting will be done on whether to select the applicant or keep the position vacant. In the case of a tie, the candidate having the majority of the Program Representatives' votes is selected.

In the case no candidate comes forth to seek an Executive Board position, the President will work alongside the Dean of Student Affairs to appoint an individual to the position. In the case no candidate comes forth to seek a General Board position, the Executive Board will work to appoint an individual. In the case the position remains unfilled, its responsibilities will be delineated among CJSSG membership.

**Section 7.4 Timing.** The CJSSG General Election is held no later than the second week of the academic year. Students will have 48 hours to vote. The CJSSG General Election must be accessible to all eligible students and must be tailored to ensure that no segment of the eligible student body is disenfranchised.

**Section 7.5 Process.** The Adviser manages the CJSSG General Election via the Elections Committee, which is composed of the Executive Board of the prior academic year. In the event that the outgoing Executive Board cannot participate in aiding this Committee, the election process is run by the Adviser in consultation with the Dean of Student Affairs. The committee determines candidacy and campaign guidelines, in accordance with the principles delineated in

this Constitution. This Committee coordinates support for election day procedures and activities including:

- I. Distributing election information and Election Committee decisions internally to CJSSG and externally to the student body and candidates;
- II. Announce election results to the student body
- III. Distribute posters for the General Election for display and in consultation with candidates;
- IV. Collaborate with the Dean of Student Affairs to update the CJSSG website with candidates' profiles and campaign videos and statements;

**Section 7.6 Results.** Once a final count of votes is achieved, the Adviser announces the CJSSG General Election results publicly within three business days of the election. The Adviser releases voting records upon request by any candidates.

**Section 7.7 Replacements.** See Section 6.11

## **ARTICLE VIII. REFERENDA**

**Section 8.1 Purpose.** A CJS-wide student vote, organized by the CJSSG, will be held to recommend procedural changes concerning official CJS matters or Columbia University matters regarding the press. These referendums will offer CJS students the opportunity to assert their desire to work with the administration to shape procedures within the scope of CJS's operations.

The referendums will act as a tool for accountability, enabling CJS students to engage in the administrative decision-making process. Due to the extensive process involved in conducting referendums, they will be utilized to convey the strongest possible sentiments on administrative matters, after other efforts to implement change have not achieved the desired results.

**Section 8.2. Jurisdiction.** Referendums serve as an appropriate mechanism for addressing issues within the purview of CJSSG and/or the jurisdiction of the CJS administration. The decision on whether and how to implement referendums involving matters beyond the authority of the CJS administration rests with the leadership of Columbia University, including the University President and Board of Trustees.

In matters that pertain to more than one school, if not the entire university, the main policy-making forum is the University Senate.

**Section 8.3 Referendum Review Committee.** Referendum proposals will be reviewed by a special ad-hoc committee chaired by the University Senator, known as the Referendum Review

Committee (RRC). The RRC will consist of the University Senator, Vice President, Student Affairs Chair, the M.S. Program Representative, and the M.A. Program Representative. The CJS Dean of Academic Affairs will also serve on the committee and will hold non-voting, observer status. This committee will determine whether proposals may advance to the rest of the CJSSG, which will make the final determination as to whether the referendum will be made available to the CJS student body for voting.

Upon receiving a proposal, the RRC will review and suggest revisions within one week. The sponsor(s) will have one week to accept or reject these suggested changes. Once the sponsor(s) submit a revised draft based on the RRC's suggestions, the RRC will make a final decision. The decision will be determined by a majority vote.

If a proposal is approved, it will advance to the CJSSG voting. In the event a proposal is not approved, the committee will provide detailed feedback to the sponsor(s), outlining the rationale behind the decision. Proposals that are not approved may be reconsidered in the following semester. The feedback provided will include:

- I. Comments on any biased language identified
- II. An assessment of whether all possible avenues to achieve the desired outcome have been explored
- III. Evaluation of whether the proposal falls within the jurisdiction of CJSSG
- IV. Consideration of the potential impact on students

If the proposal is determined not to proceed, recommendations will be given to the sponsor(s) on alternative resources where available to pursue outside of a referendum. The committee provides a decision within one week of the final review.

#### **Section 8.4 Proposition Guidelines.**

- I. A proposition question shall be neutral and shall not contain biased language that can unintentionally influence how voters engage with an issue.
  - A. Example of biased language: Do you support the urgent need for a smoking section in the Toni Stabile Student Center as a means of enhancing the student experience?
  - B. Example of neutral language: Do you support the development of a smoking section in the Toni Stabile Student Center?
- II. A proposition shall be limited to “yes” or “no” answer choices.
- III. A proposition shall not pertain to the operations of student organizations/groups.
- IV. A proposition shall not contain language referencing specific individuals.

**Section 8.5 Procedure Referendum.** Proposals must be submitted to CJSSG via the Referendum Proposal Form. The proposal must include the following components:

- I. Sponsorship from a member of CJSSG
- II. Signatures from 10 percent of the CJS student population on a petition
- III. Any additional documentation demonstrating other efforts made to address the issue (meeting notes, email exchanges, etc.)

Referendum proposals will be approved on a rolling basis. To be considered for the current semester, a referendum must be submitted to CJSSG within the first eight weeks of the semester. This is intentional to give sufficient time for a proper execution of the referendum process before the end of the semester. Proposals received after this deadline will be reviewed for the subsequent semester. This schedule ensures a prompt and meticulous rollout of the referendum process, allowing for a thorough evaluation of proposals and effective implementation of the voting procedure.

Upon approval of a proposal by the RRC, the sponsor(s) will have one week to produce the final draft of the referendum for review by CJSSG. CJSSG will then have one week to review the final draft before voting. A two-thirds majority vote of the CJSSG is required to proceed with hosting the referendum.

Following the CJSSG's approval of a referendum, the University Senator will send an announcement to the CJS student body containing the final referendum proposal 48 hours before the commencement of the voting period. Students will have one week to cast their votes.

Additionally, there will be a one-week period before voting begins during which the sponsor(s) may campaign on the proposed issue within CJS. Campaigns must adhere to established guidelines; any violations will result in the referendum being withdrawn from the voting process. Campaign guidelines are as follows:

- I. Sponsor(s) may maintain one single-page poster on each of the public bulletin boards.
- II. Digital flyers and messages may only be posted in class social media groups only after receiving permission from the group's board. There is a limit of one message per day, per group.
- III. Campaign materials may be posted on personal social media accounts and student group(s) social media accounts. Non-sponsors(s) may voluntarily share and 'repost' materials and endorsements on their personal social media accounts during this time. Sponsor(s) can also spread their cause through word of mouth.
- IV. Sponsor(s) wishing to hold campaign information sessions may do so.
- V. There shall be no campaigning in classroom settings.
- VI. There cannot be any hate speech used in campaigning or referenced in any materials.
- VII. Campaign materials may not contain any official logos of Columbia University, CJS, and/or CJSSG. Any campaign materials with these logos will be taken down.

VIII. Vote buying, paying others to campaign or advertise the referendum cause, or purchasing social media sponsors, promotions, or advertising services are not allowed.

Sponsor(s) may not accept outside donations or sponsorships for their campaigns.

IX. CJSSG reserves the right to investigate and take appropriate action in response to any suspicious or improper existing, planned, or anticipated campaign actions. Failure to comply with guidelines may result in the individual responsible being barred from bringing forward future referenda.

For a referendum to be approved, a minimum of two-thirds of CJS students must participate in the voting process. Of those participating, the referendum must secure over 50 percent in favor to pass. Failure to meet both criteria will result in the referendum not being approved. Should the referendum not pass, the sponsor(s) must wait till the next semester before re-submitting the issue. A resubmission must include changes reflecting the feedback given by the RRC. The Secretary will announce the results to the CJS student body within 48 hours following the conclusion of the voting period.

**Section 8.6 Action Points.** Once referendum voting concludes the following steps will be Implemented:

I. The CJSSG Executive Board will publish the results of the referendum in a cable sent out to the CJS community, including students, faculty, staff, and administration.

II. If the referendum passes:

a. The CJSSG Executive Board will discuss the referendum with CJS Leadership within 14 days.

b. CJS Leadership will identify the corresponding department to examine the feasibility of the referendum

c. A representative of the administrative department will convene a meeting with the referendum sponsors and a representative of the RRC to discuss the feasibility of implementing the approved referendum.

i. If feasible, the administrative representative and a representative of the referendum-sponsored student group will outline action items to address the referendum and produce a strategic plan.

ii. If deemed not feasible, the administrative representative will work with the referendum sponsors on alternatives.

d. A summary of these outcomes will be shared with the CJS community including students, faculty, staff, and administration.

## **ARTICLE IX. INTEGRATION CLAUSE**

**Section 9.1 Constitutional Review Clause** The CJSSG Constitution shall be reviewed by a special ad-hoc committee chaired by the University Senator, as and when required. This

committee shall be called the Constitutional Review Committee (hereafter referred to as the “CRC”).

- I. The CRC is composed of the University Senator, Secretary, and Academic Affairs Chair.
- II. The suggestions of the CRC shall be considered at a General Board meeting during the Constitutional Review Period of two weeks.
- III. The procedures of Article IX, Section 2, below, shall be followed for any proposed amendments.

### **Section 9.2 Amendment Process During Constitutional Review**

- I. An amendment may be proposed to the CRC by any member of CJSSG.
- II. A draft of the proposed amendment(s) shall be distributed to all other CJSSG members at least one week prior to the vote by the CJSSG.
- III. A two-thirds vote when a quorum is present of CJSSG shall be required to accept the amendment(s).
- IV. Once accepted, the amendment shall be added under an Amendments Section in the Constitution below.
- V. At the following Constitutional Review, all amendments shall be integrated and/or abolished.

### **Section 9.3 Amendment Process Between Constitutional Review**

- I. An amendment may be proposed by any member of the CJSSG.
- II. A draft of the proposed amendment(s) shall be distributed to all other CJSSG members at least one week prior to the vote.
- III. The Secretary shall document the amendment(s) for a vote
- IV. A two-thirds vote of CJSSG shall be required to accept the amendment(s).
- V. A passed amendment will be placed in Article X.
- VI. All documented amendments shall be considered by CJSSG during the next Constitutional Review.

## **ARTICLE X. RATIFICATION**

**Section 10.1 Ratification.** This constitution was ratified on April 14, 2025 following a majority vote by the Columbia Journalism School class of 2025.

**Section 10.2 Acknowledgments.** CJSSG acknowledges the example set by the School of International and Public Affairs Student Association (SIPASA) and the SIPASA Constitution. It acknowledges the work of University Senator Alex J. Rouhandeh, Board Member Eric Santomauro-Stenzel, President Subhanjana Das, Adviser Rebecca Castillo, and the 2025 Society of Professional Journalists, Columbia Chapter.