

American Constitution Society of American University Washington College of Law Constitution

Article I

This organization shall be known as "The American Constitution Society of American University Washington College of Law."

Article II

The American Constitution Society for Law and Policy is a group of students concerned about the pervasive conservative orthodoxy in American law and politics. We believe deeply in the importance of law as the mechanism which governs the relationships between and among the individuals and institutions that form our society, and we recognize the direct relationship between legal theory and the broader political debate about the kind of society in which we live.

In recent years, the view has been ascendant that the traditional values of compassion and respect for human dignity have little or no place in legal discourse. This view permeates all aspects of legal debate: academic scholarship, judicial interpretation, and debate about laws proposed for enactment. The cornerstone of this legal view is an approach to understanding the United States Constitution that is essentially devoid of concern for the way in which the law affects the lives of the people who make up the nation in which we live.

We believe, contrary to this conservative orthodoxy, that the law, and, in particular, the Constitution, serves human values. We believe that the Constitution is a charter of liberty, the blueprint for a noble and unique experiment designed to prevent the excesses of government in order to protect the human dignity necessary for individuals to realize the full potential of their lives. The goal of the Constitution, and the United States it created, is to permit people to succeed in the "pursuit of happiness," one of the inalienable rights this nation explicitly was founded to secure to the American people.

We believe that the Constitution, and by extension, many other areas of American law, can be understood only by reference to principles of decency, reason, humanity and compassion. We believe that those who enforce the law must have concern for the way in which it affects the lives of the people who make up the nation in which we live. And we believe these principles should form a starting point for enactment, as well as interpretation, of the law.

The mission of the American Constitution Society is to harness these values of compassion and respect for each individual, and to re-incorporate them into American law and politics, in order to build a stronger and more decent national community. We seek to restore the fundamental principles of respect for human dignity, protection of individual rights and liberties, genuine equality, and access to justice to their rightful -- and traditionally central -- place in American law. We want to strengthen the intellectual underpinnings of -- and the public case for -- a vision of the law in which these values are paramount. Our goal is a rekindling of the hope that by reason and decency, we can create an America that is better for us all.

Article III

Membership shall be open to all American University Washington College of Law students, faculty and staff. The American University Washington College of Law Chapter of the American Constitution Society does not discriminate against members on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religious creed, gender identity and expression, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, genetic information, disability, political affiliation, ideology, veteran status, or any other category.

Article IV

While events and activities sponsored by the American University Washington College of Law Chapter of American Constitution Society are open to all members of the broader American University Washington College of Law community, active membership is only open to students enrolled at American University Washington College of Law. To be considered an active member, an individual must attend at least half of the meetings and events each semester. Inactive members attend less than half of the meetings and events per semester. Only active members may vote in elections. However, both active and inactive members are permitted to attend meetings and events.

Article V

The American Constitution Society officers shall be members of the American Constitution Society Executive Board, which will meet periodically to determine the general direction of the American Constitution Society and to decide issues of long-term importance to the American Constitution Society.

Only current American University Washington College of Law students may serve as officers of the American Constitution Society Executive Board. Faculty and staff of the American University Washington College of Law may serve as faculty advisors.

The American Constitution Society officers shall be as follows:

Faculty Advisor(s): The Faculty Advisor(s) shall serve as a resource(s) for ACS members, facilitate the acquisition of speakers, and serve as a liaison between the local chapter and the advisors of American Constitution Society chapters at other schools.

President: The President shall call ACS meetings, coordinate the operations and direction of the ACS, and serve as a liaison between the ACS and the American University Washington College of Law administration.

Vice-President: The Vice-President shall call ACS meetings in the President's absence and coordinate the activities of the Chairs.

Secretary: The Secretary shall compile and maintain the minutes of meetings and the records of the organization, keep a current list of members, update the ACS national calendar with chapter events, and be responsible for notifying members of meetings. The Secretary will also take on the role of the Historian. The Historian will maintain an institutional memory in the face of constant membership turnover. Good records, maintained by good Historians, will allow the chapter to pass on the contacts and expertise you accumulate so that each year's chapter does not have to start from scratch. The Historian will track participant and member information. This will be especially helpful for the chapter to reach back to prior chapter leaders.

Treasurer: The Treasurer shall maintain the financial accounts and records of the ACS, set forth the ACS's budget, submit the ACS's financial reports to the Student Bar Association according to SBA guidelines.

Membership Chair: The Membership Chair shall organize a membership drive in the fall and shall organize additional membership drives as needed to recruit new members and to assign them to committees.

Programming Chair: The Programming Chair shall lead the Program Committee, which shall plan and organize the fall and spring events.

Social Media and Publicity Chair: The Social Media and Publicity Chair shall lead the Social Media and Publicity Committee, which will be responsible for advertising for ACS events, the membership drive, and general membership meetings.

Liaison to Lawyer Chapter: The Liaison to the local ACS Lawyer Chapter will serve as the primary contact and connection to the ACS local lawyer chapter. Coordinate with the local lawyer chapter to cosponsor and organize events such as substantive panels and debates, networking events, career panels and happy hours.

Liaison to Student Chapters: The Liaison to Student Chapters will coordinate with other ACS student chapters in our geographical vicinity to co-sponsor events, invite speakers and organize networking events and socials.

Career Development Chair: The Career Development Chair will work with alumni, the school's career services department, and others to help advance the careers of current ACS student members.

Class Representatives: 2L and 3L class representatives will be responsible for outreach to their respective classmates about chapter activity.

Section Representatives: 1L section representatives will be responsible for outreach to their respective classmates about chapter activity. There are typically four sections in the 1L class.

Article VI

The election of Executive Board officers shall take place in the spring semester of each academic year and shall be completed before the deadline set by the SBA. The 1L section representatives shall be elected in the fall semester of each academic year. Terms of office shall last for one year from the time of election.

All active members are eligible for election. At the time of election, the President (or the President's designee) shall send an email to the American Constitution Society listserv, and make announcements at meetings as appropriate, seeking interested candidates.

Active members interested in holding a primary Executive Board office for the following academic year must email the current President indicating interest in a specific position. Candidates must also include a short biographical statement and qualifications for running. The outgoing President (or the President's designee) shall compile all candidate statements and distribute them to the listserv.

If only one candidate is interested in a given office, he or she shall automatically hold that office. Should there be more than one candidate for any given office the President shall announce a General Membership Meeting, during which the members shall vote. Only active members may vote in the election.

Candidates must receive a plurality of votes to be elected.

Article VII

Officers may be removed for good cause by the unanimous vote of the remaining members of the Executive Board.

In the event that the President resigns, the Vice-President shall take over the office of the President. The new President shall appoint a new Vice-President. The Executive Board must affirm the appointment by a majority vote. If any other member of the Executive Board resigns, the President shall appoint a replacement. The Executive Board must affirm the appointment by a majority vote.

In the event of a vacancy, the President shall appoint an individual to fill or fulfill the duties of the vacant role. The appointment shall be affirmed by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

Article VIII

The President reserves the right to establish committees. Committee chairs will be designated by the President, but all active members are eligible to participate in each committee.

Article IX

Amendments to this Constitution and to the by-laws shall be adopted by two-thirds vote of the Executive Board, except that no amendment shall be adopted without the affirmative vote of both the President and the Faculty Advisor(s).

Article X

This organization shall be governed by this Constitution, its bylaws, and the rules and regulations of American University Washington College of Law.

Article XI

This Constitution shall be ratified by two-thirds vote of current active members.