



Constitution of UMOJA at the University of Pennsylvania

Established 1998

Last Revised, January 2025

e, Black undergraduate students of the University of Pennsylvania, in order to provide a means for effective collaboration, increased political representation, and comprehensive dissemination of information among students and student organizations of the African Diaspora, do hereby establish this Constitution for UMOJA at the University of Pennsylvania.

Article I - UMOJA

1. Mission

- a. UMOJA derives its name from the Kiswahili term for “unity.” The first of the seven principles of Kwanzaa, “Umoja” is the core mission and primary charge of this umbrella organization.

2. Purpose

- a. UMOJA shall speak as the representative voice of Black students and Black student organizations (hereafter “Clients”) at the University and shall derive its legitimacy from the consent and confidence of its membership organizations (hereafter “Constituents”). UMOJA shall be charged with uniting its Constituents into a common political voice, mobilizing its Constituents for a common agenda, and organizing its Constituents under a common calendar.

3. Executive Board

- a. The UMOJA Executive Board (hereafter “Executive Board”) shall be composed of two Co-Chairs; one Political Chair; one Internal Chair; one External Chair, one Finance Chair; one Community Service Chair; one Marketing Chair and one Constituent Engagement Chair.
 - i. Co-Chairs shall have the following duties:
 1. Oversee and execute all UMOJA programming and initiatives;
 2. Schedule and lead all UMOJA meetings;
 3. Manage UMOJA’s relationships with other coalitions and entities at the University of Pennsylvania;
 4. Maintain UMOJA’s relationships with administrators, faculty, and staff at the University of Pennsylvania.
 - ii. Internal Chair shall have the following duties:
 1. Work closely with the Co-Chairs to maintain a consistent and organized structure for executive board;
 2. Coordinate UMOJA board meetings by reserving meeting spaces, tracking attendance, taking notes, and creating action items; maintain Google Calendar

3. Handle all internal communications, including creating and distributing UMOJA emails and updates;
4. Responsible for the organization of all internal social events.
- iii. External Chair shall have the following duties:
 1. Develop and maintain relationships with alumni, creating opportunities for alumni involvement in UMOJA initiatives;
 2. Strengthen partnerships with external constituencies, such as 7B and the Office of the Vice Provost, as delegated by Co-Chairs;
 3. Implement a system for tracking the outcomes of partnerships and collaborations for reference and improvement;
 4. Assist with the development and coordination of annual UMOJA programming, particularly Black Convocation.
- iv. Political Chair shall have the following duties:
 1. Express the political voice of UMOJA to the University of Pennsylvania community;
 2. Orchestrate responses to issues that arise in the Black community with the consent of the Executive Board;
 3. Inform the Executive Board of any political developments at the University of Pennsylvania and beyond.
- v. Finance Chair shall have the following duties:
 1. Maintain the budget of UMOJA, including processing emergency funding requests from Constituents;
 2. Represent the Black community on University financial advisory boards;
 3. Support financial chairs of Constituents in maintaining budgets and raising funds.
- vi. Community Service Chair shall have the following duties:
 1. Enforce UMOJA's community service requirements among its constituency;
 2. Plan at least two community service events per semester;
 3. Maintain partnerships with the Netter Center, the Civic House, and other community organizations.
- vii. Constituent Engagement Chair shall have the following duties:
 1. Serve as the liaison between the Executive Board and Constituents by coordinating all Constituent communications, serving as the initial point of contact for Constituent inquiries, facilitating Constituent conflict resolution, tracking Constituent engagement and participation, and executing Constituent coffee chats;
 2. Present at UMOJA meetings on topics involving Constituent participation;
 3. Create and send out UMOJA emails.
- viii. Marketing Chair shall have the following duties:
 1. Responsible for the creation and promotion all UMOJA marketing materials, following well-developed marketing schedules;
 2. Maintain and consistently update all UMOJA platforms, including its website and LinkedIn;

3. Design UMOJA apparel orders.

4. Selection of Board Members

- a. The Executive Board (hereafter “Board”) will be selected based on a simple majority vote of active Constituents on or before the last scheduled meeting of the year. Voting may take place on a date not previously scheduled unless the date is objected to by the majority of voting Constituents at least 30 days before the proposed date.
- b. Nominations
 - i. Any individual seeking to be selected to the Board shall first be nominated for one or more of the aforementioned positions. All nominations shall be received by the outgoing Board at least 48 hours before the scheduled date of voting.
 - 1. NOTE: Any nominations received less than 48 hours before the scheduled date of voting may be considered by the outgoing Board only if the position is uncontested.
 - ii. An individual may self-nominate or nominate another individual, but all nominations must be accepted by the individual running (hereafter “Candidate”) at least 24 hours before the scheduled date and time of voting to be valid.
 - iii. Once the nomination has been accepted, the Candidate may provide a written Candidate Statement to the outgoing Board for circulation among the voting Constituents.
- c. Procedure
 - i. The selection of the Board (hereafter “Election”) will be moderated by two individuals (hereafter “Moderators”) who are ineligible to run in the Election based on graduation status or identification as non-undergraduate members of the Penn community. The outgoing Executive Board shall select these individuals and confirm that they meet the aforementioned criteria.
 - ii. The Election will proceed using Robert’s Rules of Order and all rules dictated by Robert’s Rules of Order Revised (Fourth Edition).
 - iii. All Candidates shall have an allotted time to present their candidacy to the Constituents, the timing of which shall be determined by the Moderators and shall not exceed five minutes.
 - iv. Following speeches from all Candidates for a given Board position, Candidates shall jointly participate in answering questions from the Constituents, the timing of which shall not exceed ten minutes.
- d. Deliberations
 - i. Following a period of questioning, all Candidates shall be asked to leave the room and deliberations will occur among Constituents.
 - 1. NOTE: Members of the public may remain in the room and comment during deliberations, but only Constituents may vote.
 - ii. Deliberations for each round of Candidates shall proceed for no longer than 20 minutes for all positions with the exception of deliberations for Co-Chair, which shall proceed for no longer than 30 minutes.

1. NOTE: Motions to Limit or Extend Debate may be proposed at any time by an active Constituent and may be confirmed by a simple majority of voting Constituents present.
 - iii. An allotted time shall be designated at the beginning of deliberations for members of the outgoing Board to speak regarding candidates. Members of the outgoing Board wishing to speak during Deliberations must do so during this period.
- e. Voting
 - i. Each Constituent is allowed one vote on behalf of the organization, and the primary voter should be the Representative.
 1. NOTE: A Representative may designate a maximum of two surrogates for the date of the Election in the event that the Representative cannot attend all or part of the Election. These surrogates must be board members of the Constituent and not represent any other Constituent on the date of the Election. These surrogates are hereafter subject to all the requirements of the Constituent during voting.
 - ii. In order to be eligible to vote for a given Board position, the Constituent must be present for the entire duration of Candidate presentations for that position, including Candidate speeches, the question period, and deliberations.
 1. NOTE: A Constituent Representative or surrogate may take a Point of Personal Privilege for a maximum of five minutes during deliberations and retain voting eligibility.
 2. NOTE: If a Constituent is ineligible to vote for a Board position, the Constituent may become re-eligible to vote for the next slated position for which the Constituent is fully present.
 - iii. In order to proceed with the Election voting, at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of all voting Constituents shall be present.
 1. NOTE: Quorum may adjust to accommodate the loss of voting rights and new memberships or at the discretion of voting members present based on historical rate of attendance at General Body Meetings in a calendar year.
 - iv. All motions during the Election, including but not limited to Motion to Limit/Extend Debate, Motion to Previous Question, and Motion to Recess shall be passed by a simple majority vote of Constituents present.
- f. Vacancies
 - i. If any Board position shall go unfilled on the date of the Election, nominations will be accepted from the floor from any individuals present. Individuals therein become Candidates and shall follow the aforementioned procedure to be selected.
 - ii. If any Board member, with the exception of one or both of the Co-Chairs, resigns from a position more than four weeks before the next scheduled election, an application designed by the remaining Board will be sent to all Constituents and members of the Black community at the University of Pennsylvania to fill the vacancy by application.

1. If one or both of the Co-Chairs resigns from the Executive Board at any time, immediate action shall be taken by the remaining members of the Board to fill the position in an interim capacity with one or more of the members of the Executive Board. The remaining Board shall also notify the Constituents within 48 hours of the resignation.
 2. If an Interim Co-Chair wishes to remain in the position in a permanent capacity, this individual shall present to the Constituents at the earliest regularly-scheduled meeting and must be confirmed by a simple majority of voting Constituents present.
 3. If the simple majority vote fails or one or both of the Interim Co-Chairs shall refuse the role, nominations will be solicited from Constituents and a special election will be held, the details of which are at the discretion of the remaining Board in consultation with Makuu.
- iii. The application to fill a vacant Board position shall not require any additional information or criteria that was not requested during the original Election for the position, with the exception of written responses to the Candidate's fitness, suitability, and motivations for seeking the position.
 - iv. A Candidate applying to fill a vacancy may be selected by the remaining Board based on a simple majority vote.
- g. Transition
- i. It shall be the responsibility of the outgoing Board to educate and empower newly selected members of the Board.
 - ii. Members of the outgoing Board shall hold at least one meeting (hereafter "Transition") with the newly selected Board
 - iii. It shall be the responsibility of the outgoing Internal Chair to share written Transition materials and information with all members of the newly selected Board.

5. Meeting Guidelines

- a. The Board shall meet weekly to discuss matters related to the Constituents and Clients and the welfare of UMOJA.
- b. The Board shall schedule regular meetings (hereafter General Body Meetings) of the Board and Constituents biweekly.
 - i. Dates, times, and locations for the General Body Meetings shall be communicated to the Constituents at the beginning of each semester, and foreseeable changes to any meeting date shall be communicated at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
- c. General Body Meetings are open to the public, and all Clients are encouraged to attend.
- d. All individuals present at a General Body Meeting shall have the ability to make motions during a General Body Meeting, but all motions shall be seconded by a voting Constituent to be passed and carried.
- e. In all instances of voting, each voting Constituent is allowed one vote on behalf of the organization and a simple majority of voting Constituents may pass a motion.

Article II - UMOJA Constituency

1) Membership Eligibility

- a) An organization is eligible for membership as an UMOJA Constituent if the organization satisfies at least one of the following criteria:
 - i) The organization dedicates its primary focus to addressing issues and concerns related to people of the African Diaspora at the University of Pennsylvania;
 - ii) The organization's membership is predominately Black;
 - iii) The organization's goals and interests strongly coincide with UMOJA's mission of unity;
 - iv) The organization is identified as a potential partner by UMOJA Board and subsequently adopted by Constituents based on the organization's capacity to help UMOJA achieve its goals.
- b) Constituents shall broadly align with the six remaining principles of Kwanzaa. These principles are NIA (Purpose), UJIMA (Creative Work and Responsibility), IMANI (Faith), UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics), KUJICHAGULIA (Self-Determination), and KUUMBA (Creativity).

2) Membership Representatives:

- a) Each Constituent shall appoint an Executive Board member to be the representative to UMOJA (hereafter "Representatives"). The duties of the Representative are as follows:
 - i) The Representative shall ensure that the Constituent remains committed to the mission of UMOJA, including but not limited to ensuring the submission of event dates to the UMOJA Calendar, providing representation at the UMOJA Retreat, and facilitating the active participation of the Constituent at UMOJA Week.
 - ii) The Representative shall attend each UMOJA meeting to speak on behalf of the Constituent and relay all UMOJA developments to the organization.
 - iii) The Representative shall vote on behalf of the Constituent and is responsible for informing a surrogate voter in the event of the Representative's absence during a vote.
 - (1) NOTE: A Representative may only designate a surrogate voter in the event that the Representative is scheduled to be absent and the surrogate shall be another member of the Executive Board. To be enfranchised, the Representative shall inform UMOJA Board at least 24 hours prior to a scheduled vote.
 - iv) The Representative shall inform UMOJA of all organizational leadership and mission changes as they arise before the next General Body Meeting.
- b) Constituent groups must comply with the requirements of UMOJA constituency each semester

3) Membership Requirements:

- a) Each Constituent must fulfill the three listed requirements each semester to remain in good standing with UMOJA:
- b) Attendance at General Body Meetings**
 - i) Representatives are expected to attend all General Body Meetings
 - ii) Each Constituent is permitted 2 absences per semester from GBMs.
- c) Completion of Community Service Requirement**

- i) This obligation can be fulfilled through any of the following methods:
 - (1) Attending a UMOJA community service event with at least three-fourths of the board present;
 - (2) Organizing and attending their own community service event;
 - (3) Attending a separate community service event with at least three-fourths of the board present
- ii) Community service is defined as unpaid work aimed to benefit and better a community
- iii) Service based Constituents are exempt from the community service requirement
- d) **Attendance at Preventing Assault and Violence Education (PAVE) Workshops**
 - i) Each Constituent is expected to send 1 representative to participate in required PAVE workshops facilitated by UMOJA Board, unless specifically waived for certain groups.

4) Probation and Derecognition

- a) Constituents that fail to meet the expectations of membership are subject to probation and possibly derecognition. A Constituent will automatically be put on probation and will lose voting rights if one of the following conditions are met:
 - i) Two or more General Body Meetings are missed without excuse by the Representative and are not attended by a surrogate;
 - (1) NOTE: A Representative may designate a surrogate in the event that the Representative will miss a General Body Meeting. The surrogate shall be another member of the Executive Board.
 - ii) Constituent fails to fulfill the required Community Service Requirement, unless specifically waived for certain groups.
 - iii) Constituent does not participate in required PAVE Workshops, unless specifically waived for certain groups.
- b) Constituent groups may restore their voting power and be removed from probationary status at the discretion of the UMOJA Board. The Constituent shall document a re-commitment to UMOJA before being re-enfranchised.
- c) Constituent that remains on probation for **two consecutive semesters** will be subject to **derecognition** and must reapply for recognition, subject to the discretion of the UMOJA Board.

5) Membership Intake

- a) Any organization believing to be in accordance with the aforementioned criteria may seek membership in UMOJA. The potential new Constituent (hereafter “Applicant”) shall seek membership in accordance with the following process:
 - i) The Applicant shall contact one UMOJA Board member expressing interest.
 - ii) The Applicant shall submit the organization’s mission and/or vision statement and reasons for pursuing membership (hereafter the “Application”) to the Executive Board.
 - iii) Upon invitation by the Executive Board, the Applicant shall present the Application to the Constituents at a General Body Meeting and shall include information regarding potential synergies with current Constituents.

- iv) An Applicant that is not invited by the Executive Board may not appeal the decision but may choose to re-apply for membership after one full semester has passed or if there is new information regarding the Applicant's mission and/or vision statement.
- v) A majority vote of Constituents present at the meeting shall confirm the Applicant's acceptance as a Constituent.
- vi) Constituent status begins immediately following a majority vote in favor of the Applicant and the new Constituent is subject to all of the expectations herein and granted all privileges associated with UMOJA membership.

6) Current Membership

- a) The following organizations hold membership in UMOJA:
 - i) NIA (Purpose)
 - (1) Black Pre-Law Association (BPLA)
 - (2) Black Wharton Undergraduate Association (BWUA)
 - (3) Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS)
 - (4) Minorities in Nursing Organization (MNO)
 - (5) National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
 - (6) National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
 - (7) Future Black Men in White Coats (FBMWC)
 - (8) Black Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Collective (BEUC)
 - (9) Health of African Immigrants Program (HAIP)
 - (10) Black Student Athletes at Penn (BSAP)
 - (11) National Society of Black Women in Medicine (NSBWM)
 - (12) BlackGen Capital (BGC)
 - ii) UJIMA (Creative Work and Responsibility)
 - (1) Ase Academy
 - (2) Beyond Arrests: Re-Thinking Systematic Oppression (BARS)
 - (3) Shea Collective
 - (4) The Accountability Initiative (TAI)
 - iii) IMANI (Faith)
 - (1) New Spirit of Penn Gospel Choir (NSP)
 - iv) UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics)
 - (1) Black Student League (BSL)
 - (2) Caribbean American Student Association (CASA)
 - (3) Penn Ghana
 - (4) Penn African Student Association (PASA)
 - (5) Descendants of Afro-Americans at Penn (DAAP)
 - (6) Grupo Quisqueyano (GQ)
 - (7) Society of African Internationals at Penn (SAIP)
 - (8) Penn Ethiopian and Eritrean Student Association (PEESA)
 - (9) Drexel Penn East African Student Association (DPEASA)
 - (10) Sudanese Association at Penn (SAAP)
 - v) KUJICHAGULIA (Self-Determination)
 - (1) Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, Gamma Epsilon Chapter

- (2) Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated, Psi Chapter
- (3) Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, Gamma Chapter
- (4) Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated, Mu Iota Chapter
- (5) Onyx Senior Honor Society (Onyx)
- (6) Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated, Mu Chapter
- vi) KUUMBA (Creativity)
 - (1) African American Arts Alliance (4A)
 - (2) The Inspiration
 - (3) West African Vibes (WAVE)
 - (4) Campus Curlz
 - (5) Students of Hip Hop Legacy (SOHHL)
 - (6) Monolith
 - (7) Faces of Black Penn (FOBP)

Article III - UMOJA Finances

1. Budget Management

- a. All matters related to the management, allocation, and disbursement of the UMOJA budget shall be overseen by the Finance & Fundraising Education Chair.
- b. Upon request, information regarding the yearly budget of UMOJA may be shared to Constituents at the discretion of the Executive Board.
- c. It is the joint responsibility of the Finance & Fundraising Education Chair and the Political Chair to request budget increases from the University to account for inflation, Constituent additions, and unforeseen changes to budgetary needs.

2. Funding Requests

- a. UMOJA is an undergraduate funding organization at the University of Pennsylvania and shall make funds available to organizations meeting the following criteria:
 - i. A requester of funds shall be the Representative of an active Constituent or another individual representing an active Constituent, wherein “active” is defined by the Constituent’s voting status;
 - ii. A requester of funds may request funds only for upcoming events that must also be open to multiple members of the Constituent organization, all Constituents, or all Clients;
- b. A requester of funds shall apply via the Common Funding Application by 11:59 PM the day prior to a General Body Meeting in order to present.
- c. A funding request may be accepted by a simple majority of voting Constituents present.
 - i. Funding requests will be presented in the order in which they were received via the CFA.
 - ii. Funding allocations may be rescinded if a representative of the constituent group departs the General Body meeting prior to signing in, as they would not be officially present to receive funds.
 - iii. UMOJA reserves the right to provide all, some, or none of the funds requested by an organization or cause based on amendments submitted and debated by Constituents.

- iv. During the deliberation process, the representative of the organization or cause that submitted the funding request must temporarily leave the room until discussion and voting have concluded.
 - 1. During deliberations, any member who represents another organization under the same constituent group making a funding request — and who is not the requester — is prohibited from speaking on, advocating for, or making recommendations regarding that request.
- d. If a funding request is approved by Constituents, the Finance & Fundraising Education Chair shall oversee that UMOJA dispenses funds at the earliest possible date and in the amount agreed upon by Constituents at the General Body Meeting.

Article IV -UMOJA Amendments

1. Amendment Guidelines

- a. Amendments to this Constitution may only be submitted by an active Constituent or member of the Board.
- b. No amendments to the Probation & Inactive Status clause shall be made within 30 days of a regularly-scheduled Election.
- c. No amendments to the Current Membership clause shall be made within 7 days of a regularly-scheduled Election.
- d. Amendments to the Current Membership clause may be made at any other time based on new developments affecting a Constituent and may be adopted temporarily following a simple majority vote by the Board.
 - i. Amendments to the Current Membership clause must be ratified by a simple majority of the present, active Constituents and the General Body Meeting immediately following the Board vote.
 - 1. NOTE: If the vote fails among Constituents, the Current Membership clause reverts back to its original state. The Board may bring a new amendment before the Constituents at the following General Body Meeting to satisfy the discrepancy.

2. Amendment Procedure

- a. A member of the Board or an active Constituent may propose an amendment to any section of this Constitution (with the exception of the “Current Membership” clause) to the Executive Board at any time, and this amendment shall be voted upon by the Executive Board before consideration by the Constituents.
 - i. Amendments to the Current Membership clause may be made immediately following the aforementioned procedure herein.
 - ii. Other amendments must be received 48 hours before an Executive Board meeting to be considered. All amendments submitted less than 48 hours before a regularly-scheduled Executive Board meeting will be discussed the following week.
- b. Upon invitation by the Executive Board, a Board member or Constituent may present the outlined changes at a General Body Meeting.

- c. Following a presentation of the proposed changes, this Constitution shall be amended or superseded only by an absolute majority vote of active Constituents present in which a minimum of ten percent of the current active Constituents shall participate.

NOTE: An affirmative vote will constitute a "Referendum."

- d. In the event of an affirmative vote, this Constitution will be updated before the next General Body Meeting by the current Political Chair, and the "Revised by Referendum" date will be changed to reflect the date of the vote on the amendment.