

The Uniting Christian Students' Association of Southern Africa

CONSTITUTION

(As amended by the National Council on 16 April 2011)

Clarification of terms

"The church": the Christian church in general, as embodied in various denominations.

"churches": specific Christian denominations.

"organisations": a general term referring to associations, churches, bodies, movements, etc, in a broad sense.

"advisory": a person who attends in an advisory capacity has the right to speak and take part in debates but not to vote.

"observer status": a person with observer status attends meetings but does not have the right to speak or vote. The right to speak may be granted on request.

"urgent matters": matters which need to be attended to urgently, which are not restricted to the powers of the full meeting and which will cause damage to the association if not attended to quickly.

"failure": when a member or functionary of the association fails to do anything that he or she had been commissioned or instructed to do.

"extraordinary circumstances": circumstances that do not occur normally, but need to be addressed specifically for the sake of the Kingdom and the association.

Chapter 1

General

1. Section 1

1.1 Name

The name of the organisation is "The Uniting Christian Students' Association of Southern Africa" (UCSA) or "Die Verenigende Christen-Studentevereniging van Suider-Afrika" (VCSV).

1.2 Kind of organisation

UCSA is a non-profit, autonomous Christian organisation based on its confession of faith; with full legal personality; bearer of its own rights and liabilities; and no member of UCSA has any claim to any assets or income of UCSA; and also no responsibility for any expenses and liabilities of UCSA.

1.3 Confession of faith

1.3.1 We believe in the triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) who is almighty and exists eternally.

1.3.2 We believe in the sovereignty of God, who created human beings in his own image.

1.3.3 We believe in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, the Son of God, and his Lordship over every aspect of society and personal life. Through his death and resurrection we receive forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God and our neighbours.

1.3.4 We believe in the Holy Spirit who moves people to repentance, sanctifies them by his indwelling power and brings through them the renewal of society.

1.3.5 We believe that the Bible, as the inspired Word of God, is our final authority. We accept his Word as the source of the values and norms of our lives and society. The message of the Bible is addressed to all people and through it the Holy Spirit speaks to people in every culture to perceive its truth.

1.3.6 We believe in the Holy Universal Church which consists of those who confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. He binds us together as members of his body, in a unity which transcends every barrier, be it race, sex, language or culture, and sends us to proclaim the gospel unto the ends of the earth.

1.3.7 We believe that God calls us to obey Him above all in every aspect of life.

1.3.8 We believe that Jesus Christ will return to judge the living and the dead and reign forever as King.

2. Section 2

2.1 Aims

In dependence on God the organisation strives:

2.1.1 to put the honour and glory of the triune God before all things;

2.1.2 to proclaim the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as He is revealed in his Word to young people;

2.1.3 to encourage its members to confess their faith in Jesus Christ as only Redeemer of the world and to live as his disciples;

2.1.4 keeping the above-mentioned in mind, to encourage its members to be faithful in Bible study and prayer;

2.1.5 to lead members to spiritual maturity through Bible-centred fellowship;

2.1.6 to encourage members to be witnesses for Christ in word and deed in every aspect of their lives;

2.1.7 to help its members to face the challenges of our time with Bible-based, consistent, and Christ-centred life views;

2.1.8 to sensitise its members concerning the needs of others and to encourage them to work towards justice, peace and reconciliation in society;

2.1.9 to teach its members loyalty to their church and to help them become active members of their churches;

2.1.10 to develop good relationships with all churches and organisations that support UCSA's aims;

2.1.11 to establish a Christian presence on campuses of educational institutions in South Africa;

2.1.12 to encourage its members to develop good and significant relationships with members of other Christian organisations with similar aims and confessions of faith;

2.1.13 for reconciliation and unity among Christian students;

2.1.14 to motivate and mobilise members to service and to spread the kingdom of God in the whole world;

2.1.15 for unity with its sister organisations and other organisations with similar aims and confessions of faith;

2.1.16 to encourage among its members a sense of co-responsibility, teamwork and leadership in contrast to the individualism of our times;

2.1.17 to encourage amongst its members a Bible-based critical attitude towards life in all its facets, as well as introspection and openness towards one another.

2.2 Commitment to the principles of UCSA

It is expected from all current and new staff, council and committee members to endorse the principles and traditions of UCSA, its confession of faith and its aims as described in Sections 1 and 2 and to commit themselves to the promoting thereof.

3. Section 3

3.1 Relationship with schools and tertiary institutions

3.1.1 UCSA as an organisation of learners and/or students strives at all times to maintain good relationships with education authorities at all levels of management.

3.1.2 UCSA branches are established in consultation with principals or governing bodies of educational institutions.

3.1.3 Activities of an UCSA branch are supervised internally in accordance with the constitution by principals and/or governing bodies of educational institutions, and in co-operation with the responsible teacher/UCSA representative.

3.2 Relationship with the church

3.2.1 UCSA cannot, should not and do not want to substitute the ministry of churches to their young members, but presents an opportunity for young people to reflect on the word of God and to live in obedience to it in their schools and tertiary institutions.

3.2.2 As autonomous Christian organisation UCSA acknowledges the supervision of churches over their members.

3.2.3 UCSA wishes to serve the church in its striving to call its members to faith choices in Jesus Christ regarding their everyday life and to equip them as disciples of Christ.

3.2.4 UCSA regards it as the task of the church to teach its members its specific dogma.

3.2.5 UCSA encourages pastors of churches represented by a significant number of the members of a branch to become involved with the spiritual leadership of the branches.

3.2.6 UCSA strives to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all churches who are interested in the work of the organisation.

3.2.7 UCSA undertakes to avoid dogmatic matters about which there may be differences of opinion among churches involved in programme and study material made available to its members and in the style in which activities are presented.

3.2.8 UCSA encourages branches or projects of UCSA which do not operate in schools or at tertiary institutions to liaise with local churches.

3.2.9 UCSA asks that the leadership of the organisation and/or those taking the lead in its activities during group discussions or any other activity or meeting of the organisation to undertake not to act contrary to its confession of faith in any way nor to allow conflict to be created about dogmatic matters, nor to allow activities about which there are differences of opinion among different churches.

3.2.10 UCSA asks churches to undertake not to use UCSA activities to recruit members.

3.2.11 UCSA encourages its members and church representatives to maintain the Biblical principles of tolerance, mutual consideration and mutual spiritual growth when members of different churches come together for UCSA activities.

Chapter 2

General organisation and structures

4. Section 4

Membership

4.1 Target group

UCSA's target group are mostly learners and students.

4.2 Membership

4.2.1 Membership of the association is available to learners and students, teachers, lecturers, others who are involved with the association and any ex-member or supporter who identifies with the confession of faith and aims of the association, as well as those employed by UCSA, regardless of church membership.

4.2.2 A person becomes a member of UCSA voluntarily.

4.2.3 The National Council or its National Committee may terminate or refuse membership at any time, stating reasons for its decision.

4.2.4 Persons who do not formally become members of a branch may nevertheless attend meetings or events.

5. Section 5

Sections and levels

5.1 Section for primary and secondary schools

There are two levels in this section:

- * first level – Provincial / Regional Councils
- * second level – Branch Councils at schools.

Provincial Councils may group together and form Regional Councils, their functions being the same as the Provincial Councils concerned. Any variance with official provincial borders should be done in consultation with the National Council.

Provincial Councils may, if necessary and after consultation with the National Council, subdivide into Area Councils (constituting in this case second level management; Branch Councils then constituting the third level).

5.2 Section for tertiary institutions

There are two levels in this section:

- * first level – National Students' Council where Branch Councils are represented;
- * second level – Branch Councils at tertiary institutions.

5.3 Section for ex-members and supporters

There are three levels in this section:

- * first level – National Supporters' Committee at which Provincial Committees are represented;
- * second level – Provincial Supporters' Committees at provincial level;
- * third level – Branch Supporters' Committees at local level.

5.4 National committees

National committees are constituted and receive specialised instructions from the National Council.

5.5 National Council

The National Council is the highest level of governance. The National Council should consult the Provincial Conferences regularly to ensure participation en to give effect to the stipulations in Sections 12 and 14 below.

All the various sections are represented on the National Council.

The Head Office shall execute the policies determined by the National Council.

5.6 Provincial / Regional Conferences

The Provincial / Regional Conference is the highest policy making body at provincial level in UCSA. Branches are represented at the Provincial / Regional Conference.

6. Section 6

Provincial and Regional Conferences

6.1 Constitution

Provincial / Regional Councils write their own regulations for the constitution of their Provincial / Regional Conference and submit it to the National Committee for approval. The following are guidelines:

6.1.1 The Conference should be representative of the branches and members of UCSA in die province / region.

6.1.2 The Conference should offer learners, students, teachers and other volunteers the opportunity to give input regarding the direction in which UCSA develops, important decisions such as alterations to chapters 1 and 4 of the Constitution, the dissolution of the association or the merger of the association with another association.

6.1.3 The Conference can be scheduled to coincide with big provincial / area events such at holiday camps.

6.1.4 The Conference must meet every three years, though consultation with members should occur annually.

6.1.5 The National Council may request extraordinary meetings of Provincial / Regional Conferences in cases where urgent matters need to be tabled.

Chapter 3

The National Council

7. Section 7

National Council

7.1 Constitution

The National Council is constituted as follows:

7.1.1 For the section for primary and secondary schools:

- one delegate, preferably the chairperson, from every Provincial Council.
- two delegates, of which one is preferably the chairperson, from the Northern Regional Council.
- one learner from each of the Northern, Central and Southern regions.

7.1.2 For the section for tertiary institutions:

- two delegates, of which one is preferably the chairperson, from the National Students' Council.

7.1.3 For the section for ex-members and supporters:

- one delegate, preferably the chairperson of the National Supporters' Committee.

7.1.4 An educationist who can further UCSA's interests at educational authorities.

7.1.5 The Executive Head, with the right to vote. He/she may, however, not vote on matters concerning the conditions of his/her employment.

7.1.6 The members of the full-time Management Team in advisory capacity.

7.1.7 One representative from each of UCSA's sister organisations, with observer status.

7.1.8 The National Council or its National Committee may co-opt people on the council, with or without the right to vote.

Where applicable, the responsible bodies shall appoint secundi.

7.2 Term of service

Members nominated by specific bodies shall serve for three years.

7.3 Meetings

7.3.1 The National Council meets at least once a year.

7.3.2 In highly exceptional cases an extraordinary meeting may be called at the decision of the National Committee or at the insistence of a third of the serving members.

7.3.3 A quorum is constituted by one more than half of the serving members.

7.3.4 Notice of meetings should be mailed to members at least sixty days in advance. Notice of extraordinary meetings should be given thirty days in advance.

7.3.5 Agendas and documents of meetings should, if at all possible, be sent out twenty-one days in advance. Late documents may be tabled if the meeting gives its consent.

7.3.6 Any member of the National Council, its National Committee, Provincial / Regional Councils, the National Students' Council, national committees or Provincial / Regional Conferences may send matters to be tabled. Such matters or reports must reach the Head Office at least sixty days before the meeting.

7.3.7 Draft resolutions regarding the constitution should be sent to the Head Office at least ninety days before the date of the meeting. This clause may be waived in extraordinary circumstances, should the National Council unanimously so resolve.

7.3.8 Minutes of meetings should be sent out to all members within sixty days of the meeting, if at all possible.

7.3.9 The National Council appoints a scribe. It may be a fulltime staff member who will then serve without the right to vote.

7.3.10 Members who are prevented from attending a meeting are responsible for notifying their secundi, if any, and also for sending them all the documents for the meeting.

7.3.11 Travel and accommodation costs will be remunerated to members from the budget of the National Council, according to the terms decided upon by the National Council.

7.4 Office bearers

The National Council elects a chairpersons and vice chairperson from its members every three years and by secret ballot. Should there be a vacancy for one of these two offices, the next meeting of the National Council shall appoint someone in the office. In the mean time the National Committee shall appoint one of its members to act as temporary office bearer.

7.5 Duties of the National Council

The National Council:

7.5.1 is the governing body of UCSA and the only body with legal personality in the association (see Section 1.2);

7.5.2 develops the mission and general policy focus of UCSA;

7.5.3 approves the general strategic planning and management of the association as proposed by die fulltime management team;

7.5.4 has the right to assign any of its functions except amending the constitution to its National Committee or other committees and regularly receives their reports on these commissions;

7.5.5 deals with draft resolutions regarding the constitution;

7.5.6 deals with all other reports, papers and draft resolutions;

7.5.7 is responsible for appointing an Executive Head, Deputy Executive Head and Departmental Heads;

7.5.8 drafts regulations for the conditions of service for its staff members;

7.5.9 determines the duties of the Executive Head, Deputy Executive Head and Departmental Heads, supervises their work and fills vacancies;

7.5.10 appoints, on the advice of Provincial / Regional Councils, provincial staff, and, on the advice of National Committees, specialist staff;

7.5.11 liaises closely with Provincial / Regional Councils and National Committees, receives regular reports on their work and advises them where necessary;

7.5.12 sees to it that the regulations of Provincial / Regional Councils and National Committees are in accordance with the constitution;

7.5.13 has, in extraordinary circumstances, the right to dissolve a branch (giving reasons), or to dismiss a member of a Branch or Provincial / Regional Council or any other committee or to dismiss any council or committee. The Council may act through its National Committee in this regard;

7.5.14 builds and promotes positive relations and co-operation with other Christian organisations with aims and confessions of faith similar to those of UCSA;

7.5.15 appoints, when possible and necessary, delegates to any local or international conference which may be to the benefit of UCSA;

7.5.16 appoints National Committees to attend to all the specialised concerns of the association;

7.5.17 ensures that the members of UCSA are consulted at national, provincial or regional camps and other big events regarding the content and style of programmes and activities and regarding the direction in which UCSA develops.

7.5.18 awards honorary membership of UCSA upon motivations from Provincial / Regional Councils or National Committees;

7.5.19 sees to any other matter that may concern the activities of the association directly or indirectly;

7.5.20 annually receives UCSA's financial statements and budgets for discussion and approval;

7.5.21 annually lays down maximum amounts regarding expenses not budgeted for the following:

- urgent acquisition of movable property
- urgent maintenance jobs;
- urgent current expenses;
- decides on the buying or selling of fixed property.

8. Section 8

Rights and signing authority

8.1 The National Council shall have the power to purchase, acquire, receive, sell, exchange, alienate, hire or mortgage any fixed property or properties on behalf of the association.

8.2 Any property or properties accepted or purchased by the National Council shall be transferred and registered in the name of the Uniting Christian Students' Association of South Africa.

8.3 All documentation that may be necessary for the hire, rental, transfer, acquisition, and receipt of transfer of the properties, or the negotiation, cession, substitution, discharge or partial payment

of a mortgage by or in favour of the association, as well as all other documentation that may be necessary for the proper execution of this Section, shall be duly signed and executed by any two of those persons authorised by the National Council.

8.4 The National Council has the power to purchase moveable property, and to acquire, sell, exchange or otherwise alienate and rent it, also the power to control and invest any assets belonging to the association of whatever nature at the sole discretion of the said National Council. It shall have the power to make loans using the assets of the association as security, obtain credit, open bank accounts, use money as appear necessary in the interest of the association, and negotiate contracts in the interest of the association, all at the sole discretion of the said National Council. Two persons of those authorised by the National Council have the power to sign all documentation that may be necessary for any of the above mentioned in the name of the National Council and/or the association.

8.5 The National Council has the power to institute or defend legal action in any court on behalf of the association, and two persons of those authorised by the National Council have the power to sign the necessary documentation.

9. Section 9

The Committee of the National Council

9.1 Constitution

The Committee of the National Council (hereafter National Committee) is constituted as follows:

9.1.1 The chairperson and vice chairperson of the National Council.

9.1.2 Two members from each of the following regions:

Northern region (Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West and Gauteng)

Southern region (Western Cape and Eastern Cape)

Three members from the following region:

Central region (Northern Cape, Free State and KwaZulu/Natal)

These members are nominated by the members of the National Council representing the concerned provinces and are then elected by the National Council. They should, if possible, represent the former associations as well as the different provinces in the region.

9.1.3 The Executive Head, in an advisory capacity.

9.1.4 The Deputy Executive Head, in an advisory capacity.

9.1.5 The other members of the fulltime Management Team serve on the National Committee in an advisory capacity and should attend meetings where strategic planning is done (at least once a year). The agenda for other meetings will determine who should attend.

9.1.6 Secundi for representatives are nominated by die concerned regions. The National Council elects members from these nominees.

The members of the National Committee who represent regions, serve ex officio in the Provincial / Regional Council of the province / region that they represent.

The National Committee appoints a scribe. It may be a fulltime staff member who will then serve without the right to vote.

9.2 Term of service

The term of service for members elected by the National Council is the same as that of the National Council.

9.3 Meetings

The National Committee meets as often as is necessary.

9.4 Quorum

A quorum is constituted by one more than half of the serving members of the National Committee who have the power to vote.

9.5 Tasks and powers

The National Committee handles all urgent matters that cannot wait until the next meeting of the National Council. These matters should be limited to the essential minimum. The National Committee has the power to act in the name of the National Council when the National Council is not in session, reporting on its actions to the National Council, except in the following matters which are restricted to the powers of the National Council or the National Conference: amending the constitution, electing office bearers and approving the mission and general policy of UCSA.

10. Section 10

The Head Office

10.1 Powers

10.1.1 The Head Office of UCSA serves the association at national level and is accountable to the National Council.

10.1.2 The Executive Head decides upon the composition and tasks of the Head Office staff, in consultation with the Deputy Executive Head and Departmental Heads.

10.2 Mandate

The Head Office

10.2.1 executes the instructions of the National Council;

10.2.2 liaises closely with educational authorities and confers with them on matters of mutual interest;

10.2.3 liaises closely with churches and reports regularly to them on behalf of the National Council;

10.2.4 compiles memoranda and reports for the National Council in order to stimulate the development and growth of the work of the association;

10.2.5 sees to the safekeeping of all documents, minutes and publications of the association;

10.2.6 remains on the cutting edge of national and international trends and developments in youth ministry and also in touch with the needs of young people;

10.2.7 organises opportunities at camps or other events where members are consulted about the style and content of programmes and activities and about the direction in which UCSA develops. It does this either by itself or together with Provincial / Regional Councils;

10.2.8 is responsible for all UCSA publications and provides members of the association with necessary resources;

10.2.9 publishes an official mouthpiece for the association and regularly sends out a newsletter to UCSA supporters;

10.2.10 makes UCSA known through the media to further its aims;

10.2.11 advises the National Finance Committee about all matters pertaining to the finances of the association;

10.2.12 draws up a budget for the Head Office and draws up budgets for the Provincial / Regional Councils after consultation with the Provincial / Regional Councils. These budgets are presented to the National Finance Committee for its approval, and reported to the National Council;

10.2.13 sees to it that proper account is kept of all financial matters of the association. It also presents financial statements, covering a period of 12 months, audited by a qualified auditor, as soon as possible but within three months of the end of the financial year (1 January to 31 December of each year), to the National Finance Committee and sees to it that all councils and committees act according to the Regulations for the Handling of Funds;

10.2.14 is responsible for all official correspondence of the association;

10.2.15 sees to it that the work of the association is properly administered, and is responsible for an effective infrastructure;

10.2.16 keeps account of all necessary information and data on branches, supporters, committee members, etc;

10.2.17 puts its administration at the disposal of the National Committees for the proper execution of their duties;

10.2.18 organises all projects and meetings of national interest;

10.2.19 initiates the proper functioning of the various levels of governance in UCSA.

Chapter 4

General

11. Section 11

Notices and requirements of the constitution

11.1 Notices sent out according to this constitution will be regarded as properly sent out when sent by ordinary mail so that they should reach the addressee in time.

11.2 Inadvertent failure to send any notice of any meeting to a member shall not render that meeting invalid.

11.3 The National Conference or National Council has the power to condone an inadvertent failure to comply with any requirement of the constitution, but does not have the power to condone intentional failure by meetings, functionaries or members.

12. Section 12

Dissolution

12.1 The association may be disbanded by a decision of at least two-thirds of the voting members of the National Council, with the mandate of at least two thirds of the Provincial / Regional Conferences.

12.2 The National Conference shall decide by majority vote regarding the appropriation of the assets of the association on the understanding that the assets will only be transferred to a Christian organisation involved in furthering the spiritual welfare of young people in a way which is in agreement with the objectives of UCSA. The said organisation should also be exempt of payment of income tax, donations tax or estate duty. No individual member of UCSA shall have any right or claim with regard to any of the assets of UCSA upon dissolution.

12.3 Such decision regarding dissolution shall be binding upon all members of the association and no member or management body of UCSA shall, as a result of such decision, have any claim or right upon the association or upon any member or governing body of the association.

13. Section 13

Merger

13.1 The association may merge with another organisation upon a two-thirds majority decision of voting members of the National Council, with the mandate of at least two thirds of the Provincial / Regional Conferences.

13.2 Following the merger the assets of the new association shall be the combined assets of the two associations that merged. With regard to fixed property, all necessary registration shall take place at the Deeds Office to reflect the ownership by the united organisation in the title deed(s).

13.3 Such decision of merger shall be binding on all members of the association and no member or management body of UCSA shall, as a result of such decision or merger, obtain any claim or

right whatsoever against the association or against any member or governing body of the association.

14. Section 14

Amending the constitution

Amending Section 6 and the Sections in chapters 1 and 4 of the constitution shall only be done by the National Council with the mandate of at least two thirds of the Provincial / Regional Conferences. The National Council amends the remainder of the constitution. Proposals for amending the constitution shall be handled in the following manner:

14.1 The Head Office should be notified per registered post of the proposed amendment at least sixty days in advance of the meeting of the National Council. This stipulation may be cancelled in exceptional cases, should the National Council unanimously so resolve.

14.2 The constitution may only be amended upon a two-thirds majority vote at a National Council meeting. Amendments to the constitution are immediately valid, unless the meeting decides otherwise.

Branch Councils, Provincial / Regional Councils, National Students' Committee, National Committees and Provincial Conferences

The compilation of Branch Councils, Provincial / Regional Councils, the National Students' Committee, the National Supporters' Committee, and other National Committees for special purposes such as finance, properties, marketing and media, world missions, holiday outreaches, service year for Christ, leadership development and national projects (youth rallies, gender matters, etc) and the Provincial / Regional Conferences should be functional and should not be prescribed rigidly from above. Members of the said councils or committees draw up regulations in accordance with their assignment / mandate and submit these to the National Committee of the National Council for its approval.