

# **Constitution of the Tennessee College Democrats**

We, the Tennessee College Democrats, in understanding the importance of our participation in the political process and Democratic Party, hereby dedicate ourselves with a higher measure of devotion to organizing college students across the state of Tennessee in order to secure the participation and development of the young generation in the political process and Democratic Party. We strive to better our country and to promote the principles of equality, opportunity, social welfare, protections for the vulnerable, and freedom to establish a strong and just society. As college students, we solemnly commit ourselves to representing the interests of students and youth within the political process and Democratic Party.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **Name, Purpose, and Affiliation**

Section 1. NAME: The name of this organization shall be the "Tennessee College Democrats," herein referred to as "TNCD."

Section 2. PURPOSE: The purpose of TNCD is to support the philosophy and candidates of the Democratic Party at the local, state, and national levels. Furthermore, TNCD intends to support all efforts to increase the participation of college students in the Democratic Party. To achieve these ends, TNCD shall educate and train its members so that they are better able to:

1. Educate students about the philosophy of the Democratic Party;
2. Work to elect local, state, and national Democratic candidates;
3. Strive to bring young people into the political process; and
4. Work with Democrats across the state of Tennessee to promote the agenda of the Democratic Party.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **Membership**

Section 1. ELIGIBILITY: Membership in TNCD shall be open to all students pursuing a degree at a post-secondary educational institution in Tennessee. Membership shall not be discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or handicap.

Section 2. INDIVIDUALS: TNCD members shall be members of their college or university's chapter of College Democrats. If an individual wishing to be a TNCD member attends a college or university without a College Democrats chapter, they may petition, in writing, the Executive Board of TNCD to become an at-large member.

Section 3. NEW CHAPTERS: College Democrats chapters must apply for a charter from the Executive Board of TNCD to be considered an officially chartered member of TNCD. The application process is to be determined by the TNCD Director of Membership, subject to approval by the Executive Board at the first Executive Board meeting following the annual TNCD statewide convention, or if the Executive Board chooses, on a case-by-case basis.

Section 4. RECHARTERING: The TNCD Director of Membership, subject to approval by the Executive Board, may determine if chapters should recharter on a yearly, biyearly, or otherwise stated timeframe at the first Executive Board meeting following the annual TNCD statewide convention.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **Composition of the Executive Board**

Section 1. AUTHORITY: The Executive Board shall have general authority and responsibility for the affairs of TNCD.

Section 2. VOTING MEMBERS: All elected members of the Executive Board shall be eligible to vote. All appointed members shall remain nonvoting, but may express their opinions and concerns, which will be considered by the rest of the Executive Board. The exception is the appointed Secretary position, which shall become eligible to cast the tie-breaking vote in the event of an Executive Board tie.

Section 3. ELECTED MEMBERS: The Executive Board shall be composed of eight (8) elected members, and the line of succession is as follows: President, Vice President, Director of Development, Director of Communications, Director of Political Affairs, Director of Minority Affairs, Director of Membership, and Director of Programs. Elected members shall be elected yearly at the TNCD convention. The term of office of elected members shall begin immediately after the close of the annual TNCD statewide convention, and shall terminate at the close of the following annual TNCD statewide convention.

Section 4. APPOINTED MEMBERS: The Executive Board shall contain the following appointed members: the Secretary, regional coordinators, and caucus chairs. The Secretary must be nominated by at least the first Executive Board meeting following the annual TNCD statewide convention. The maximum number of regions shall be three (3) and follow the state's legal definition of the Grand Divisions: East, Middle, and West. The President shall determine the number and jurisdictions of regional coordinators. The President will also determine the number and content of the caucuses, and may be petitioned by any member to start a new caucus at any time. Appointed members shall be nominated by the President and approved by a simple-majority vote of the Executive Board. The term of position of appointed members shall begin immediately after their appointments are confirmed by a vote of the Executive Board and terminate at the close of the annual

TNCD statewide convention. The President may, at their discretion, create new appointed positions with the approval of a majority of the Executive Board.

Section 5. CHAPTER AFFILIATION: There may be no more than two (2) elected members from a single college or university's chapter on the Executive Board at a time, unless there are no other members who are able and willing to fill the office.

Section 6. MEETINGS: Regular meetings of the Executive Board shall be convened at the discretion of the President with at least twenty-four (24) hours notice, unless the convening is an emergency meeting defined by the President. A quorum of at least half plus one of the voting members shall be required before any official vote may be taken.

Section 7. DISMISSAL: A cause for dismissal from the Executive Board shall be defined as malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance of assigned duties or upon other grounds as determined by the Executive Board to constitute sufficient cause. Any member of the Executive Board, or a non-Executive Board member approved by a simple-majority vote by the Executive Board quorum present, may charge an Executive Board member with the reasons for their dismissal during a meeting of the Executive Board. The member in question must be offered an opportunity to defend themselves at the same or next meeting. After a period of one (1) week following the defense, the dismissal of the member in question shall be put to a vote before the Executive Board. If a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority of the Executive Board quorum present voted in favor of removal, said member shall be removed and the office will be declared vacant.

Section 8. VACANCY: A vacancy shall be declared when a member of the Executive Board resigns, has been dismissed from their office or position, or becomes incapacitated. If there is a vacancy of any office or position other than President, the President shall appoint a successor with a simple-majority vote of the Executive Board. If the vacancy is the President, then the Vice-President shall become President and appoint a new Vice President with a simple-majority vote of the Executive Board. The line of succession outlined in Article III, Section 3 only comes into effect when the President cannot be succeeded by the Vice President.

Section 9. HOLDING MULTIPLE OFFICES OR POSITIONS: No person shall hold more than one of the offices or positions on the Executive Board. Members of the Executive Board may, however, serve simultaneously in their executive office or position and on the Executive Board of their college or university's chapter.

#### **ARTICLE IV**

##### **Duties of the Executive Board**

Section 1. INVOLVEMENT: All members of the Executive Board must maintain active involvement in TNCD activities, including regular participation in meetings of the

Executive Board. Failure to maintain active involvement may constitute cause for dismissal.

Section 2. DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT: The President shall:

1. Attend and preside over meetings of the Executive Board and be responsible for determining the goals and direction of TNCD;
2. With the assistance of the Executive Board, be responsible for the implementation of the goals of TNCD;
3. Appoint ex-officio members of the Executive Board with the advice and consent of the Executive Board;
4. Act as the official representative of TNCD to other allied Democratic organizations such as the Tennessee Democratic Party, the Democratic National Committee, and College Democrats of America;
5. Attend the annual National College Democrats of America Convention or appoint another office to attend in their place;
6. Serve as the ex-officio voting representative for TNCD on the Tennessee Democratic Party executive committee and attend all Tennessee Democratic Party executive committee meetings;
7. Act as the official liaison to the Tennessee Young Democrats unless another member of TNCD is appointed to serve in this capacity; and
8. Serve TNCD and the Executive Board in their greatest capacity throughout the elected term.

Section 3. DUTIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT: The Vice President shall:

1. Attend Executive Board meetings and assist in determining the direction and goals of TNCD;
2. Along with the President, be responsible for the implementation, as well as communication, of goals of TNCD as set by the President and Executive Board;
3. Act as the President of TNCD whenever the President is unable to perform their duties, including but not limited to conducting business, holding meetings, and representing TNCD in an official capacity; and
4. Serve TNCD and the Executive Board in their greatest capacity throughout the elected term.

Section 4. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT: The Director of Development shall:

1. Attend Executive Board meetings and assist in determining the direction and goals of TNCD;
2. Create a yearly budget for TNCD with the assistance of the TNCD board;
3. Be responsible for all TNCD finances and financial reports;
4. Serve as the chief fundraiser for TNCD, including reaching out to alumni;
5. Coordinate all TNCD fundraisers;
6. Be responsible for quarterly or other PAC filings and managing the Act Blue account; and

7. Serve TNCD and the Executive Board in their greatest capacity throughout the elected term.

Section 5. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS: The Director of Communications shall:

1. Attend Executive Board meetings and assist in determining the direction and goals of TNCD;
2. Propose and implement a communications plan focusing on internal and external communications, subject to approval by the executive board;
3. Be in charge of publicity for all official TNCD meetings and events;
4. Maintain the TNCD website and social media sites;
5. Draft TNCD press releases if not done by the President; and
6. Serve TNCD and the Executive Board in their greatest capacity throughout the elected term.

Section 6. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS: The Director of Political Affairs shall:

1. Attend Executive Board meetings and assist in determining the direction and goals of TNCD;
2. Execute the campaign goals as determined by the executive board;
3. Be the official liaison between TNCD and all local, state, and national campaigns, including candidate, constitutional amendment, or otherwise;
4. Create and maintain an updated database of internship opportunities for members;
5. Enable members to become involved in campaigns;
6. Assist the President in forming an annual legislative agenda;
7. Brief all members on legislation at the state and national level;
8. Organize all TNCD lobbying efforts; and
9. Serve TNCD and the Executive Board in their greatest capacity throughout the elected term.

Section 7. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF MINORITY AFFAIRS: The Director of Minority Affairs shall:

1. Attend Executive Board meetings and assist in determining the direction and goals of TNCD;
2. Represent and maintain active relationships with members of racial minority, LGBTQ+, and other minority communities of the TNCD on the Executive Board;
3. Submit an annual report to the Executive Board on vulnerable minority communities within the state and throughout the country;
4. Draft and implement an annual plan to help protect vulnerable minority communities within the state and throughout the country, subject to approval by the Executive Board;
5. Report complaints of discrimination and other improper acts against minority members to the Executive Board for potential Executive Board action; and
6. Serve TNCD and the Executive Board in their greatest capacity throughout the elected term.

Section 8. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP: The Director of Membership shall:

1. Attend Executive Board meetings and assist in determining the direction and goals of TNCD;
2. Determine an application process, subject to approval by the Executive Board at the first Executive Board meeting following the annual TNCD statewide convention, or if the Executive Board chooses, on a case-by-case basis;
3. Determine, subject to approval by the Executive Board, if chapters should recharter on a yearly, biyearly, or otherwise stated timeframe at the first Executive Board meeting following the annual TNCD statewide convention;
4. Recruit new chapters and members and assist in the chapter or at-large member application process;
5. Propose and implement an annual membership plan, subject to approval by the executive board;
6. Maintain an updated contact list of all officially chartered College Democrats chapters, chapter leaders, and at-large members, as well as an updated database of TNCD alumni contact information;
7. Oversee chapter development; and
8. Serve TNCD and the Executive Board in their greatest capacity throughout the elected term.

Section 9. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS: The Director of Programs shall:

1. Attend Executive Board meetings and assist in determining the direction and goals of TNCD;
2. Develop and organize all TNCD events, including statewide, regional, and campus events;
3. Assist in planning the annual TNCD statewide convention;
4. Assist individual chapters in organizing events; and
5. Serve TNCD and the Executive Board in their greatest capacity throughout the elected term.

Section 10. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY: The Secretary shall:

1. Attend and take minutes at all Executive Board meetings;
2. Serve as the tie-breaking vote in the case of an Executive Board tie;
3. Maintain a physical file or cloud storage for TNCD records;
4. Maintain a historical record of the TNCD, including officers, tenure, and otherwise;
5. Assist the Director of Development in maintaining TNCD financial records;
6. Assist the Director of Membership with acquiring and maintaining TNCD alumni information; and
7. Perform such duties as the President or Executive Board may assign.

Section 11. DUTIES OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATORS: The Regional Coordinators shall:

1. Attend Executive Board meetings when required by the President or Executive Board;
2. Represent their respective regions on the Executive Board;

3. Work with the Director of Programs to host region-specific events;
4. Work with the Director of Membership to coordinate with chapters in their respective region; and
5. Perform such duties as the President or Executive Board may assign.

Section 12. DUTIES OF THE CAUCUS CHAIRS: The Caucus Chairs shall:

1. Attend Executive Board meetings when required by the President or Executive Board;
2. Represent their respective caucus on the Executive Board;
3. Work with the Director of Programs to host caucus-specific events;
4. Plan the caucus agenda for year, and may include the President in planning according to the Caucus Chair;
5. Plan the caucus meeting at the annual TNCD statewide convention;
6. Plan any other caucus conference calls or meetings;
7. Perform such duties as the President or Executive Board may assign.

Section 13. INDIVIDUAL FUNDRAISING: Elected members of the Executive Board shall be responsible for raising \$150 during their tenure, and appointed members shall be responsible for raising \$100 during their tenure.

Section 14. TRANSITION: All outgoing members of the Executive Board are required to turn over any documents relevant to the successful execution of their position's duties to their successor. All outgoing members must submit an end of year summary of duties and accomplishments. The outgoing Director of Development, or the President if the office of Director of Development is vacant, must ensure the incoming Director of Development understands and has access to the PAC filings, bank card, Act Blue account, and other financial needs of the TNCD. The President may also determine if any other elected office requires training by the outgoing member before the outgoing member's departure.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Annual TNCD Statewide Convention**

Section 1. DATE: The annual TNCD statewide convention shall be held every spring on campus while teaching is in progress. The executive board can vote to move it until the following fall semester if school isn't in session, before the end of the school year, to elect officers, train members, and build a community among College Democrats.

Section 2. HOST: All officially chartered chapters shall be eligible to apply to host the convention. The Executive Board shall determine the process by which chapters may apply. A simple-majority vote of the Executive Board shall determine the host of the convention. In the case of no applicants, the Executive Board may ask a chapter to host the convention.

Section 3. CONVENTION COMMISSION: A convention commission shall be formed by the Executive Board after the host chapter is selected. The co-chairs of the commission shall be the Director of Programs and a member of the host chapter. The commission shall be responsible for all matters relating to the convention, including, but not limited to, gathering official chapter rosters, creating the agenda, coordinating speakers, and overseeing registration.

Section 4. DELEGATES AND VOTING: Each chapter may bring an unlimited number of delegates to the annual statewide convention. Each chapter shall have as many votes as delegates up to but not exceeding ten (10) votes. To be eligible as a chapter delegate, a student must register for convention before voting begins, be on their chapter's official roster, and present a student ID to prove enrollment in the chapter's post-secondary institution. If any delegates are not affiliated with a chartered chapter, then they will act as a member of an independent chapter, and there will be up to ten (10) votes allocated to this group of delegates. If there are more than ten (10) unaffiliated delegates, each school represented will have at least one vote. The Elections Chair shall be responsible for determining voting eligibility and must inform chapter leaders of these regulations.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Election of Executive Board Members**

Section 1. TIME OF ELECTIONS: The election of members of the Executive Board shall take place at the annual TNCD statewide convention.

Section 2. ELIGIBILITY: Any TNCD member shall be eligible to run for an elected position on the Executive Board.

Section 3. ELECTIONS CHAIR: The highest-ranking member of the Executive Board not seeking re-election shall serve as the Elections Chair. In the event all Executive Board members are running for re-election, then the Executive Board shall choose a non-Executive Board Elections Chair with a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote. If chapters are unsatisfied with this selection, then a petition with the signatures of the simple-majority of active chapters, as defined by the Director of Membership, may request a new selection. A single chapter signature shall be met when the majority of that chapter's members sign. The Elections Chair shall be responsible for enforcing the regulations outlined in this article.

Section 4. DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY: Thirty (30) days prior to the start of the convention, individuals wishing to run for an elected Executive Board position shall submit a letter declaring their candidacy to the Elections Chair. The Elections Chair must acknowledge receipt of the letter of intent within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt. The declaration period shall end seven (7) days prior to the start of convention. A list of all candidates and candidate statements shall be sent to all chapter leaders and convention attendees



by the Elections Chair five (5) days prior to the start of the convention. After the end of the declaration period, no individual may declare their intent to run to the Elections Chair until the convention begins by proclamation of the President, and these shall be termed undeclared candidates.

Section 5. CAMPAIGN RULES: The campaign rules outlined in this article shall be announced by the President in the opening announcement of the annual statewide convention.

Section 6. CAMPAIGN EXPENSES: No candidate, whether declared or undeclared, shall spend more than \$100 on their campaign for office. A record of all campaign expenses must be sent to the Elections Chair within twenty-four (24) hours of the end of the Executive Board elections.

Section 7. CAMPAIGNING: No candidate shall begin campaigning before the Elections Chair acknowledges their declaration of candidacy. Campaigning shall be defined as any activity, in public or private, that has the intent of securing votes for a particular individual running for a position on the Executive Board. Undeclared candidates may campaign once the convention has commenced.

Section 8. ELECTION PROCEDURE: Elected members of the Executive Board shall be elected by a majority vote of the eligible voting delegates at the convention. The election procedure shall proceed as follows:

1. The Elections Chair shall determine the number of eligible voting members at the convention and announce the number of votes required to secure election.
2. The Elections Chair shall open the floor for nominations for President. A candidate may not nominate themselves. The person nominating a candidate may then make a one (1) minute nominating speech.
3. The candidates nominated for President will then be given the opportunity to deliver a four (4) minute speech. Delegates will then be given the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates for a maximum of seven (7) questions for each position.
4. After all candidates for President have spoken and answered such questions, there shall be a period of five (5) minutes before voting begins to allow chapters to caucus.
5. Voting shall take place by chapters present in alphabetical order. Chapters shall nominate who will announce the chapter's votes. After all chapters have voted, individual members unaffiliated with a chapter shall announce their votes.
6. The Elections Chair shall tabulate votes, announce the vote count, and declare the election's winner at the end of the voting procedure.
7. Steps 2-6 shall be repeated for the other elected positions in the following order: Vice President, Director of Development, Director of Communications, Director of Political Affairs, Director of Minority Affairs, Director of Membership, and Director of Programs.

Section 9. FLOOR NOMINATIONS: Undeclared candidates for a position may be nominated from the convention floor. Candidates who run for a position and lose may be nominated for other elected positions from the convention floor.

Section 10. CHAPTER VOTING PROCEDURE: Chapters shall determine whether their chapter will vote as a bloc, or allow individual members to vote as they choose. If there are ten (10) or less at-large members, the unaffiliated members shall make this decision for the established unaffiliated chapter.

Section 11. PENALTIES: The Elections Chair, in consultation with the Executive Board, shall determine appropriate penalties for violating any regulations outlined in this article. The individual in question must be given the opportunity to defend themselves before any penalties are imposed.

Section 12. RUN-OFF ELECTIONS: In the event that no candidate running for an elected position of the Executive Board reaches a majority of votes, there shall be a run-off vote between the two candidates with the greatest number of votes. In the case of a tie between the two candidates with the second highest number of votes, all three candidates shall advance to the run-off vote.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Annual College Democrats of America Convention**

Section 1. ELIGIBILITY: All TNCD members are eligible and strongly encouraged to attend the annual College Democrats of America (CDA) nationwide convention.

Section 2. DELEGATION LEADER: The Tennessee delegation leader shall be the highest-ranking member of the Executive Board not running for national office. The delegation leader shall announce the vote of the Tennessee delegation during CDA voting procedures.

Section 3. VOTING AND ENDORSEMENT: The Tennessee delegation shall determine whether to vote in a bloc or split their vote. The TNCD Executive Board may vote to endorse a candidate for CDA office. Endorsements of candidates for CDA office must be voted on at least ten (10) days prior to the start of CDA convention.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Endorsement Policy**

Section 1. RIGHT TO NO ENDORSEMENT: The Executive Board reserves the right to not endorse any candidate.

Section 2. PRIMARY ELECTIONS: The Executive Board may vote with a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority to endorse a Democratic candidate in a contested Democratic primary.

Section 3. GENERAL ELECTIONS: The Executive Board may vote with a simple-majority to endorse any Democratic candidate in a general election or a position on a question in any election.

Section 4. NON-PARTISAN ELECTIONS: During elections in which the party is not declared due to federal, state, or local law, the Executive Board may vote with a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority to endorse a candidate.

### **ARTICLE IX Proxy Voting**

Section 1. PROXY VOTING: Proxy voting shall not be allowed in any capacities, whether for the Executive Board, TNCD annual statewide convention, or CDA nationwide convention.

### **ARTICLE X Constitutional Amendments**

Section 1. AMENDMENTS: The TNCD Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of the Executive Board. Amendments must be proposed to the Executive board one week prior to voting, and may be proposed by the President, Executive Board, or chapters.

Section 2. CHAPTER VETO AND VOTES: Chapters may veto an amendment passed by the Executive Board with a simple-majority of all active chapters, as defined by the Director of Membership. Each chapter must hold a vote with all their eligible members. Chapters may also petition to adopt an amendment, if such amendment was voted down by the Executive Board, with a simple-majority of all active chapters, as defined by the Director of Membership. Each chapter must hold a vote with all their eligible members.

Section 3. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION: A full constitutional convention to rewrite the constitution may be called by a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of the Executive Board, or a petition with the signatures of two-thirds (2/3) of active chapters, as defined by the Director of Membership. A single chapter signature shall be met when the majority of that chapter's members sign.

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