

## **The Constitution of the Helvidius Group**

### **Preamble**

The following Constitution establishes the rules of operation for The Helvidius Group, publishers of Columbia University's undergraduate *Journal of Politics & Society*, a non-profit student organization of Columbia University.

### **Mission Statement**

Founded in 1989, the *Journal of Politics & Society* strives to provide a forum for undergraduate research on the social sciences for students from Columbia University and around the world.

### **Article I**

The name of this organization, which first existed during the 1989–1990 academic year as the *Columbia Undergraduate Journal of Law and Public Policy*, shall be *The Helvidius Group*, hereafter in the Constitution referred to as *Helvidius*.

### **Article II**

#### *Section I*

The Purpose of Helvidius shall be to provide a forum for students of all undergraduate divisions of Columbia University and other undergraduate institutions around the world to publish academic articles and book reviews in the social sciences. The social sciences are anthropology, communication studies, criminology, cultural and area studies, economics, history, linguistics, law, political science, psychology, sociology, development studies, and demography.

#### *Section II*

Through a national or international call for papers, Helvidius will solicit and accept submissions from other undergraduate students of colleges and universities in the United States or elsewhere. The specific list of colleges and universities contacted will vary each year at the discretion of the Editorial Board, but will include all members of the Ivy League at a minimum.

#### *Section III*

As the featured guest essay in the journal, Helvidius may solicit and accept submissions from legal professionals, public officials and figures, Columbia University faculty, and faculty from other colleges and universities at the discretion of the Editorial Board. No other published essay shall be written by anyone other than an undergraduate student.

#### *Section IV*

Although articles in the journal will treat issues of political and economic opinion, Helvidius shall have no political or group affiliation nor shall the group adhere generally to any particular political ideology.

### *Section V*

Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prevent Helvidius, at the discretion of its Executive Board, from engaging in additional projects related to its mission statement, provided that Helvidius continues to publish the *Journal of Politics & Society*. Such projects may include but are not limited to organizing academic conferences, moderating roundtable discussions, or publishing other material.

## **Article III**

### *Section I*

Helvidius does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, ethnic group, sex, sexual orientation, or any other status.

### *Section II*

Membership per se does not exist in Helvidius except as concerns the editorial staff (see Article IV). All submissions judged by the Editors to be generally relevant and of sufficient quality will be printed, limited only by funding and the time available to the Editors.

## **Article IV**

### *Section I*

Membership in Helvidius will be limited to its editorial staff, called the Editorial Board. An elected subset of the Editorial Board, the Executive Board, shall govern Helvidius. As Helvidius expands and its needs evolve, the configuration of the Editorial Board may change in accordance with voting procedures outlined in Article IV Section II (with the exception that there must always be an Editor in- Chief position), but the following will serve as the functional staff hierarchy.

Part I – The Executive Board will be composed of not fewer than three and not more than five individuals, including the Editor in Chief and Executive Editor. The titles and duties of the remaining Executive Board positions are at the discretion of each Executive Board.

The Editorial Board will be composed of a variable number of Senior and Associate Editors. The Executive Board may at its discretion establish non-editing positions on the Editorial Board to assist in layout, Web design, fundraising, or other duties. This hierarchy of positions can change in accordance with the needs of the specific board in question. All members of the Editorial Board must be undergraduate students of Columbia College, the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Barnard College, or the School of General Studies.

Every fall semester in either the last week of November or first week of December during the time that is normally reserved for the meetings of the Editorial Board, elections shall be held to determine the Editor in Chief for the following January-to-January Term. The eligible electors are defined in Part II. The transition to a January-to-January term for the academic year of 2011 to 2012 is contingent upon successfully printing an edition of the *Journal* in the fall of 2011; if this fails to occur then Executive term will revert back to a May-to-May schedule for the remainder of the 2011 to 2012 academic year.

The Editor in Chief shall be elected using an Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) system. IRV ensures that the winning candidate has the support of the majority of voters and thus prevents candidates from winning that only secure a plurality. Each elector can rank his or her candidate choices from 1, which will represent the elector's first choice candidate, to a number equal to as many candidates as are running for Editor in Chief, with 2 representing the elector's second choice candidate, 3 the elector's third choice candidate, etc. An elector is required to rank all the candidates. Once the votes have been tallied if a candidate has a simple majority, which is defined as more than 50.00% of the vote, then this candidate will be the Editor in Chief Elect. However, if after the votes have been tallied no candidate has a simple majority then the candidate with the least number of votes, or the candidates tied with the least number of votes, must be eliminated from the election. The ballots that had ranked the eliminated candidate or candidates in first place are reassigned to other candidates according to each individual ballot's second choice. If a second choice is not marked, then this ballot is not reassigned to any another candidate. If after the candidate or tied candidates with the lowest number of votes has or have been eliminated still no candidate has a simple majority then the candidate or tied candidates with the second to least number of votes is or are eliminated and the ballots that were assigned to the now eliminated candidate or candidates are reassigned according to the ballot's next ranked choice. Once this has occurred, if a candidate has a simple majority then this candidate will be the Editor in Chief Elect. However, if after the votes have been tallied a second time no candidate has a simple majority then the above process shall be repeated as many times as is necessary until a candidate has a simple majority.

Candidates for Editor in Chief who fail to be elected Editor in Chief may run for another Executive Board position as stipulated below. Similarly, if current Executive Board members do not wish to run for Editor in Chief but wish to serve another term on the Executive Board they must stand for election in the same election as Helvidius staff members who are not currently on the Executive Board and wish to run for an Executive Board position that is not Editor in Chief.

Either immediately following the election of Editor in Chief or the following week the eligible electors will elect a slate of two to four Executive Board members from among the eligible candidates.

The members of the Executive Board will be elected using a "Limited Voting" system. A LV system seeks to facilitate the election of a slate of candidates that captures the opinions of both the majority and minority in a proportionate manner. No votes are reallocated in LV and the candidates with the highest number of votes win, even if this means candidates have only secured a plurality of votes. Each elector can vote for one less candidate than there are open seats on the Executive Board. For example, if there are three open seats on the Executive Board then each elector may vote for two candidates. Electors cannot differentiate between their first or second choice candidates, etc, nor can they allocate more than one vote to one candidate. However, an elector may choose to not use all of his or her votes; for example, an elector can choose to allocate one vote to one candidate and then choose to not use the remainder of his or her votes.

Both the election of the Editor in Chief and the remainder of the Executive Board must

follow the below procedures. After each candidate gives his or her speech he or she must leave the room where the staff is meeting to allow for discussion. Once a candidate has left the room the sitting Editor in Chief will open up the candidate's candidacy to discussion by the staff in the room. This will give the staff the opportunity to comment on the work history of the candidate and will particularly give staff members who have managed or worked closely with the candidate the opportunity to comment on his or her performance and abilities. Once the discussion of a candidate has concluded the Editor in Chief will summon the discussed candidate back into the room. The next candidate will then give their speech and exit the room so that they can be reviewed. Once all candidates have given their speeches and been discussed while they were outside of the room the vote will occur. If the current Editor in Chief is seeking reelection then the role of meeting moderator will fall to the Executive Editor. If the Executive Editor is also running for reelection then the Editor in Chief will appoint another respected staff member who is not standing in the current election to preside over the meeting. Candidates are permitted to vote in the election that they are standing in.

Part II – The Editor in Chief shall be a Columbia University undergraduate with at least one and a half years of experience on the Editorial Board or at least one year on the Executive Board of Helvidius. A student who plans to graduate in the spring of a given year cannot stand for election for Editor in Chief in that same year since he or she will not be unable to fulfill the January-to-January term that the position requires. The Editor in Chief is elected as stipulated in Article IV, Section I, Part I. If by chance fewer than two candidates meet these requirements, then the Editor in Chief position shall be open to all current Editorial Board members. He or she will be confirmed by a majority vote of eligible electors, defined as the current Executive Board and all other members of the Editorial Board with at least one whole semester of experience on Helvidius.

The Editor in Chief is ultimately responsible for the form and substance of the journal and any concurrent undertakings. He or she is also responsible for duties in positions not filled, for all official appointments, and for providing general leadership to the rest of the staff.

Part III – The Executive Editor shall be a Columbia University undergraduate with at least one year of experience (with exception outlined in Part V) on the staff of Helvidius, nominated on the basis of his or her interest in the social sciences, proven writing ability, and leadership experience. The incoming Editor in Chief, in consultation with the former Executive Board, will appoint him or her from among the elected slate of Executive Board members, unless dictated otherwise by the voting procedures described in Part I above.

In the event of the absence or incapacity of the Editor in Chief, the Executive Editor shall fulfill the role of Editor in Chief until such time as the Editor in Chief may resume his or her duties.

Part IV – All other Executive Board members shall be Columbia University undergraduates with at least one semester of experience (with exception outlined in Part V) on the staff of Helvidius, nominated on the basis of their experience with the workings of Helvidius, proven and projected managerial ability, and previous service to Helvidius, and appointed by the incoming Editor in Chief in consultation with the former Executive Board, unless dictated otherwise by the voting procedures described in Part I above.

Part V – Although one semester of experience is required of Executive Board members, if the Editorial Board members at the time of selection do not fit the necessary criteria, the Executive Board may decide to open the positions to students who have no experience working with Helvidius.

Part VI – Senior and Associate editorial positions are open to all Columbia University undergraduates with the sole requirements that the student express interest and enthusiasm in Helvidius and the *Journal of Politics & Society*, and is willing to undertake the editing and advertising work delegated. As it is the goal of the Helvidius Group to mold high-quality editors and to foster an editing process whereby Associate Editors can learn from more experienced editors on the board, Editing Groups will be created each year, consisting of at least one Senior Editor and two or more Associate Editors. These groups will work together to select papers, edit them, and present the final revision of papers to the Executive Board.

Part VII - Each Senior Editor has the integral role of ensuring that the *Journal of Politics & Society* maintains its standard of high-quality writing and thought. Each Senior Editor works closely with at least two Associate Editors on editing and vetting their assigned papers. Additionally, Senior Editors, along with the Executive Board, are in charge of the final selection and editing of papers and may be called upon to assist the Executive Board in various projects commensurate with their interests and abilities.

Part VIII – Each Associate Editor works both with the Executive Board on publicity and distribution, and with his/her assigned Senior Editor on editing and selecting the papers. Associate Editors may be called upon to assist the Executive Board in various projects commensurate with their interests and abilities.

Part IX – Helvidius shall have a Faculty Advisor, who if at all possible should be a professor of political science or law. He or she shall be nominated based upon his or her interest in upholding the purpose and goal of Helvidius, and shall be elected by a majority vote of the Editorial Board.

Part X – Helvidius shall make every effort to maintain contact with its alumni and consult with them on the future course of the organization.

### *Section II*

All official decisions by and for Helvidius shall be confirmed by a majority vote of the Executive Board with each board member having one vote. In the event of a tie, the Editor in Chief shall have two votes. These voting procedures will be adhered to during the nomination and confirmation of all positions, which shall be conducted in the fall semester after an application process conducted by the Executive Board. When voting is not possible, the Editor in Chief shall have the authority to make ad hoc decisions on behalf of the Executive Board, subject to their subsequent approval.

### *Section III*

Each Editorial Board member shall serve for one academic year, and may be reappointed or appointed to a different position by the newly elected Executive Board in the following year. The Executive Board shall determine the reapplication process, if any. The term of an

Executive Board member shall commence at the end of the spring semester and continue until the end of the spring semester of the following year. Executive Board members may be reelected.

Graduating or otherwise non-returning Executive Board members should make every effort to ensure that their successors are fully trained for the responsibilities of their new position. This applies in particular to the outgoing Editor in Chief, who must work with the incoming Executive Board to ensure a smooth transition.

#### *Section IV*

Impeachment of any Executive Board member will be by unanimous decision of the remainder of the Executive Board plus two-thirds of the eligible electors as defined above; impeachment of any other Editorial Board member shall be by unanimous decision of the Executive Board. A member of the Editorial Board can be impeached only on the grounds of negligence, or for making decisions or taking actions deemed destructive to the purpose or general undertaking of Helvidius.

#### *Section V*

If a vacancy in the editorial staff should arise, whether from the impeachment, resignation, or incapacitation of a member, the Editor in Chief shall temporarily assume all of that member's duties. The Executive Board shall be empowered to immediately nominate and confirm a candidate by a majority vote on the basis of the criteria for judgment set forth in Article IV, Section I for each position.

#### *Section VI*

The Executive Board shall be jointly responsible for all aspects of managing Helvidius, including but not limited to relationships with ABC and other organizations, fundraising, communications, and project management. The Executive Board shall determine a suitable division of labor at the beginning of each term.

### **Article V**

#### *Section I*

Executive Board meetings will be held twice per week (one of the meetings being with the rest of the Editorial Board), while Editorial Board meetings will be held weekly. Meeting times will be scheduled at the beginning of each term by the general consensus of the Editorial Board.

#### *Section II*

Members of the Editorial Board are required to attend Editorial Board meetings. Missing three Editorial Board meetings without prior dispensation from the Executive Board may be grounds for dismissal from the staff under the provisions of Article IV, Section IV.

### **Article VI**

#### *Section I*

The Helvidius Group, since Fall 2004, shares a unique relationship with Columbia University's Political Science Department. This relationship includes but is not limited to

receiving advice and resources from the Department (including a relationship with the Faculty Head of the Political Science Department as well as the Administrative Assistant), connecting the Undergraduate Political Science website with the Helvidius website, and co-organizing and/or co-sponsoring a series of Helvidius-related events.

## **Article VII**

### *Section I*

Amendments may be proposed by anyone on the Editorial Board and adopted only by a majority vote. No amendments shall be made to Article II, Section III and IV, and Article III, Section I.

*In accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Activities Board at Columbia.  
Amended Spring 2011. Previously amended Fall 2007.*