

# Organization Bylaws

Middle Eastern Studies Students Association Charter V. 5 (10/13/2020)

## **Article I Middle Eastern Studies Students Association**

The name of this organization shall be the Middle Eastern Studies Students Association (MESSA).

## **Article II Purpose of MESSA**

MESSA represents the interests of the students of CMES to the faculty and staff of that program and, when necessary, to other administrative bodies at the university. MESSA organizes, promotes and sponsors academic, social and cultural activities on behalf of the CMES students. MESSA events are dedicated to fostering scholastic and personal cooperation among students intellectually involved with the study of the Middle East.

## **Article III Membership in MESSA**

MESSA membership will consist primarily of all students currently enrolled in CMES. With approval of the MESSA board, membership can be extended to any other student at the university whose academic interests relate to the Middle East and who participates in MESSA meetings and events. Membership shall be open to all UChicago students regardless of divisional or departmental affiliations and membership policy must comply with the University of Chicago non-discrimination statement. MESSA will abide by the University's hazing policy.

## **Article IV MESSA Board Positions and Duties**

The officers of the MESSA board are: President, Vice President, Secretary/Public Relations Coordinator, Treasurer, Social Media Coordinator, Social Sciences Liaison, Humanities Liaison and First Year CMES Representative. All board members are elected annually. New officer positions may be created by the board as necessary. The positions are defined as follows:

**President:** The head of the organization and one of the two people (along with the treasurer) whose signature is valid on official university documents. The president must attend, to the degree possible, all meetings of MESSA. The President must attend at least one training meeting with the Student Government in the fall. It is the president's responsibility to check Blueprint for messages and be in touch with MESSA's advisor. The President is also in charge of overseeing the elections, organizing the MEHAT lamb roast (with the treasurer), and choosing Christmas gifts for the Outreach Coordinator and Center Assistant. The board will share the cost of these presents and presents for any others for whom they are grateful. Basically, the president is responsible for making sure everything is running as it should.

Vice President: Shares duties with the President in terms of organizing and ensuring that MESSA meets regularly, goals are achieved and events are planned. Meets with the President throughout to discuss issues regarding MESSA and what needs to be done or brought up during the next meeting. Provides any other support in the organization where needed. Acts in an official capacity as the President for the purpose of, for example, running a MESSA meeting if the President is not available.

Secretary/Public Relations Coordinator: Responsible for organizing meeting times and securing the space for meetings; taking minutes at all MESSA meetings; e-mailing the minutes to officers; posting minutes to the MESSA website; serving as the liaison between MESSA and Lights (i.e. keeping in touch with the Editor-in-Chief to check on the progress of the journal, discuss funding, misc. issues and attending officer meetings as required).

Treasurer: The treasurer's most important role is to submit the Annual Allocation in March/April. The treasurer manages the budget by signing off on expenses, depositing money into MESSA account, and helping to organize the annual MEHAT lamb roast. Additionally, the treasurer is in charge of fundraising events, which includes getting CMES shirts made and sold.

Social Media Coordinator: Primary responsibilities are the promotion of the Lights publication, promotion of all MESSA events, maintenance of the Facebook Page, and coordinating updates to the website.

Social Sciences Liaison: The Social Sciences Liaison is responsible for handling all requests for funding through the Social Sciences department. The Liaison will attend two to three meetings per quarter of the Social Sciences Graduate Student Activities Committee and will submit proposals for activities and receipts for reimbursement. This position makes up half of the Social Events & Planning Committee.

Humanities Liaison: This position is responsible for preparing the quarterly budget and attending quarterly humanities meetings, acting as a liaison between MESSA and HDGSC (Humanities Division Graduate Student Council), and planning and coordinating events using humanities budget funds. Deadlines, budget request guidelines, and other important information are available here: <http://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/hdgsc/dates-deadlines/> This position makes up the other half of the Social Events & Planning Committee.

Social Events & Planning Committee: Is comprised of the Social Science Liaison and the Humanities Liaison. Their responsibility is to organize events voted on by the MESSA board. Any MESSA member can suggest event ideas.

First Year CMES Representative: Is to be elected at the end of the fall quarter from among the current first-year cohort. The representative is tasked with informing the MESSA board of any specific needs or requests from the first-year cohort during winter quarter. When the new MESSA Board is decided in the Spring, this position disappears. This is not a voting position.

Each board member is responsible for attending a majority of the meetings and events. Furthermore, all board members are responsible for passing on all necessary information regarding the running of MESSA to the new board members and within reason, be available for guidance. Moderating the MESSA list serve will be the shared duty of the Secretary and the President. The President and the Treasurer will be the primary and secondary contacts for access to the MESSA University accounts.

### **Article V Meetings of MESSA**

The MESSA board must conduct at least three open meetings during each quarter. When necessary, the officers can meet in a closed meeting which will not count toward the three meeting minimum. A quorum must be present to conduct board business. A quorum is defined as 5 out of the 7 members. The five must include either the President or the Vice President. When voting during board meetings, a majority of the board is required to pass a proposal (currently 4 members). Voting can take place online.

MESSA meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend as an observer. Only board members may vote at meetings. Meetings may be closed and limited to only board members at the discretion of the board. Anyone may petition the president in advance of a meeting to add business to that week's agenda. The President may call special meetings at any time. A quorum must still be present in order to conduct board business.

### **Article VI Elections of MESSA Board Members and Related Concerns**

MESSA board elections will be held annually during the 8th week of winter quarter. The newly elected board members will take control during the 1st week of spring quarter. The newly elected board members will attend the meetings held in the intervening weeks while learning the duties of their offices. Candidates must be non-graduating CMES students and nominated to run for a board office. Nominations will open two weeks before the date of the election and close 3 days before the vote. At the end of the nomination period, all of the nominated candidates will accept or decline their nominations in order to finalize the election ballot. After the ballot is finalized, candidates will have three days to campaign before the election.

All non-graduating members of MESSA are eligible to vote in the annual election. Voting will be conducted privately online and run by the Secretary with votes confirmed by the President.

MESSA board members may be impeached. A written petition must be submitted to the board, which will inform the member who is being impeached. That member has one week to submit a written rebuttal to the board. One week after the submission of the written rebuttal, both the member being impeached and the person who requested the impeachment will have the opportunity to speak before the board. The board will vote at that meeting whether to remove the impeached member or to dismiss the case, with 4 votes being required for impeachment to proceed.

MESSA board members may resign. Resignations must be submitted to the board in writing two weeks in advance of the effective date.

If a MESSA board position is unfilled for any reason, the remaining board members must vote on how to fill the vacant position. They may choose the process that seems most appropriate under the circumstances. Possibilities include, but are not limited to, appointment by the board, MESSA-wide election, or redistributing that officer's duties among the board until the next annual election.

#### **Article VII MESSA Advisors and Sponsors**

MESSA must maintain an advisor as required by the university in order to maintain its status as a Registered Student Organization, currently Professor Fred Donner. MESSA may select additional willing academic advisors from any faculty member affiliated with CMES, regardless of department. This additional advisor is to be a resource to MESSA members for both academic and professional development. MESSA may seek sponsors that are not affiliated with the university.

#### **Article VIII Committees of MESSA**

At any given meeting a group of two or more members may decide to form a committee for any purpose consistent with the goals of MESSA. Committees will be asked to provide status updates at future meetings, where a vote of the MESSA board will make formal the recommendations provided by the committees.

#### **Article IX Handling MESSA Funds**

MESSA will not collect dues.

All funds collected must be deposited in the student organization's account.

The Treasurer is responsible for managing and reporting on MESSA's budget. A full budget report must be made once per quarter and more frequently as requested by any member of the board.

Financial decisions will be made by board vote.

#### **Article X MESSA Website**

The MESSA Website at <https://voices.uchicago.edu/lights/> is to be maintained by the Secretary/PR board member. The site should contain a listing of events, service opportunities, board contacts, and the open meeting minutes. Any other

additional content may be added at the discretion of the board.

**Article XI Amendments to this document**

In order to amend the bylaws of MESSA, a written proposal with the amendment's exact wording must be submitted to the board. Amendments to the bylaws must be passed by a quorum of the board.

**Article XII RSO Requirements**

MESSA must fulfill all other requirements to maintain RSO status (as described here:

<http://studentactivities.uchicago.edu/sites/orcsa.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/2013%20Resource%20Guide%20Final.pdf> or elsewhere)