

Latin-American Student Union

Constitution as of April 1, 2017

Preamble

Our mission is to bring a new perspective on Latin America and Latinos in the United States to the William & Mary and Williamsburg communities. Our three goals are to celebrate our Latin American identities, create a welcoming community and to raise awareness about contemporary issues affecting Latin American and Latinx in the U.S. We recognize that Latin America is a diverse region whose inhabitants speak different languages, have different cultural practices, and rich histories. We are coming together as a Union to celebrate what we have in common as well as to share what makes us unique. **We acknowledge that we cannot be efficient leaders without first serving our local communities.** We shall work with established service organizations as well as introduce projects of our own. We will strive to abate stereotypes associated with Latinos and Latin America through education and awareness.

We acknowledge there is a pivotal difference between the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino." The former was created by the government of the United States during the administration of President Richard Nixon after successful lobbies from Spanish-speaking communities to be recognized as an ethnic minority in the US. ***The term "Hispanic" denotes Spanish-speaking and therefore excludes many countries, territories and peoples from Latin America that do not speak the Spanish language.*** These would include: Brazil, Belize, Jamaica, Haiti, Martinique, Trinidad and Tobago, The Bahamas, Guyana, Suriname, Falkland Islands, French Guinea, Cayman Islands, Aruba, Turks and Caicos Islands, Barbados, Curaçao, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Bonaire, Margarita Island, Coche, Cubagua, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Anguilla, Saint Martin, Saint-Barthélemy, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Nevis, Saint Kitts, Barbuda, Antigua, Redonda, Montserrat, Basse-Terre, Grande Terre, Marie-Galante, La Désirade, Terre-de-Haut, Terre-de-Bas, the US Virgin Islands (St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix) and the British Virgin Island (Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada, and Jost Van Dyke). The term "Hispanic" includes Spain in Europe, Ecuatorial Guinea in Western Africa, and parts of Morocco in Northern Africa. The term "Hispanic" is more accurate for Spain for it has historically been used to denote relation to Ancient Hispania (located in the present day Iberian Peninsula in Europe) during Roman times. The words Spain, Spanish and Spaniard are of the same etymology as Hispanic. *Hispanus* was the name given to a native of the Iberian Peninsula during Roman times.

The term "Latino" is a moniker that originated in the United States, and one that we believe embraces diversity. It not only includes peoples from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America but also countries where Spanish is not the official language. It makes a broad reference to the mix of European, Indigenous and African heritages of Latin America. The moniker "Latino" alludes to the idea of cultures coming together and that Latin-America is a blend of cultures. It suggests a link or connection to the languages derived from and influenced by Latin. These would include most of the European languages spoken in Latin America, which would be Spanish, French, English, Dutch and Portuguese. These five languages are the result from the blend of colloquial Latin and the languages spoken by the tribes and peoples indigenous to the territories of the Roman Empire. Therefore, "Latino" calls attention to the mestizaje cultural, métissage culturel, cultural mix, culturele mix, mix cultural that took place in Latin America during and after its European Occupation and colonization. Latino allows for the recognition of indigenous languages still spoken in Latin America today such as Quechua, Nahuatl, Creole, Quiché, Shuar, Shiwiar, Aymara, Guarani, Bokotá, Ngäbere, Apay, Kuna, Kaqchikel, Kamsá, Kalapalo, Emberá, Mam, Nanti, Otomí, Pastaza Quichua, Popti, Poqomam, Pipil, Lenca, Poqomchii, Qanjobal, Toba, Tehuelche, Sotepaneko, Warao, Xoxleng, Zoque de Oaxaca, etc.

Therefore the organization has the word "Union." We are a mix and amalgamation of different backgrounds joining together to celebrate our individual heritages as well as discover the commonalities that bonds us. We are "Latin" because we acknowledge and celebrate our diverse unique origins, and we are "American" because we are members of the American society. The term "American" indicates that the organization pertains to the western hemisphere only. LASU thus is the compromise between Latin cultures and American ideals that take place in the cultural mix, which ultimately have and continue to form the United States. We are not only a cultural organization, but also one that emphasizes education and community service as a way of encouraging and supporting upward social mobility, progress, and social justice.

Last but not least, LASU recognizes the different perceptions of Latino identities in the United States and Latin-America. The conversation regarding self-identification is more than encouraged among its members as LASU sees the very diversity of those identities vital to the organization's mission, vision and goals.

Articles

Article I - Administration of LASU

● *Section I | President*

○ The President shall act as a liaison with the Administration, Student Assembly, and Academic Departments. He or she will work closely with the Center of Student Diversity (CSD), the Hispanic Studies Department, Latin American Studies and the Office of Community Engagement of Service at the William & Mary.

Additionally, he or she will set the budget with the Treasurer, and the checking card for LASU's bank account will be under the President's and Treasurer's name. It is imperative for the president to have a cultural and academic understanding of Latinos in the US, as well as of Latin America as a region.

Furthermore, the president shall be responsible for marketing and promoting the ideals that LASU stands for. He or she shall be trained in Student Leadership Development and campus resources. He or she will answer the LASU email address regularly and as required.

- *Section 2 | Vice President*

- The Vice President shall assist the President, delegates in absence of the president (if the president studies abroad for example or is absent for medical or personal reasons), and keeps close connections with LASU's partners such as the Center for Student Diversity , and the Language Houses (French & Spanish). The Vice President will oversee committees in the campus wide LASU events. He or she will also work to establish partnerships with related organizations in other college communities.

- *Section 3 | Service Chair*

- The service coordinator shall coordinate any activity that has to do with community service and outreach. He or she will plan volunteer activities, promote service trip opportunities, participate in established projects on campus and in the community. He or she will work to establish lasting partnerships with other college service groups and community partners.

- *Section 4 | Treasurer*

- The Treasurer manages and oversee income and expenditures. They will keep track of donor names, administer bank records, collects dues from members, and is responsible for delivering "thank you" notes to donors that must be hand delivered if made to faculty, staff or students on campus. They will also be in charge of coordinating fundraisers on campus and profit chairs with restaurants in the area. All such responsibilities will be completed in a timely fashion. The Treasurer, along with the President, is responsible for setting the budget.

- *Section 5 | Secretary*

- The Secretary shall record minutes at all executive board and general body meetings. He or she will send out the minutes as soon as possible, take attendance at all meetings, oversee LASU correspondence sent out to the entire club, and be responsible for submitting scheduling forms, tabling requests and AV equipment requests pertaining to LASU activities.

- *Section 6 | Marketing Chairman*

- Marketing Chairman r is dedicated to the promotion of LASU within the William and Mary community. This includes the design and distribution of event posters, the maintenance of the LASU website, social media outreach, and the assistance to any outreach initiative or communicative task appropriate to meeting LASU's needs. It is important that the Publicity Manager strive to design creative and artistic solutions to the best of their ability. It is required and imperative that the Publicity Manager receive SARA training as soon as he or she is elected.

- *Section 7 | Historian*

- The Historian will be in charge of LASU's archives at Swem Library. He or she shall conduct research at libraries and other educational sources that contain information relevant to topics that LASU wishes to explore (e.g. Immigration). The Historian will be responsible of taking pictures at all events, and filming LASU

events (when Media Center equipment is available and if Historian is trained Media Editing). He or she will work with the Publicity manager to update the website.

The Historian will also oversee submissions to the LASU blog. Last but not least, the historian will compile an anthology of autobiographies of LASU members who wish to be part of LASU's archives at Swem. He or she will also be responsible for the LASU census.

- Section 8 | *Social Chair*

- The Social chair will be responsible for the organization of LASU inter-membership events. Emphasis will be placed on prospective membership outreach. He or she will strive to create an inclusive community and strong relationships between all members. He or she must be creative and diverse in the events he or she creates.

The Social Chair should be van

certified in order to be able to take out the OCES or the CSD van for LASU events.

Suggestions for social events include: LASU semester party, LASU semester beach trip, movie nights, intramural teams and holiday-themed potluck events held between meetings. The Social Chair must be creative and diverse in the events created, and remain mindful of budget and mobilization constraints.

- Additionally, the Social Chair is responsible for organization and implementation of the Media Naranja initiative, which is our version of the “Big and Little” process. We suggest this be conducted no later than the final LASU meeting preceding Fall Break. The Media Manzana initiative creates partnerships between old and new members to allow for strengthening of LASU members, old and new.

Article II - Fine Arts

- Section I | *Fine Arts*

- LASU will celebrate the cultures found in Latin America through Fine Arts.. The goal is to educate the William and Mary campus about the different types of

Fine Arts found in Latin America while at the same time celebrating the cultures.

- Cultural Events: LASU will take on events such as the Banquet and Dance Nights according to the capacity of its membership.

-The Banquet has historically been a play or skit put on by members and followed by a dinner. We encourage innovation as an organization and welcome new ideas regarding the Banquet’s structure. We suggest having one or two performances of any kind that connect to Latin American culture alongside a dinner. This event is open to the entire campus community. - We encourage the expansion of knowledge regarding varying dances from Latin America through events like Late Night Salsa). This event is usually held in Lodge 1 and is open to the entire campus community and takes place each semester. LASU will expand the dances to be taught to include a broader range including dances like bachata, tango, rumba, cumbia, etc.

Article III - Pluralism in Language

- Section I | *Spanish, French, Dutch, Portuguese and Other languages*

- Although Spanish stands as the most common language spoken

throughout Latin America, LASU recognizes that it is in fact just one of many. Currently, there are many people who are not monolingual. Thus we seek to be inclusive of all languages that serve as formal and informal communication. Around the world, there are many languages and dialects that often do not get officially recognized by governments; yet, they reflect the identity, traditions, and history of Latin Americans and Latinos in the United States. In our efforts to communicate our heritage through the Fine Arts, other languages and dialects will not be ignored.

- Language is not a basis for identification of heritage, thus it is up to the individual to self-identify regardless of the language they speak.

- *Section 2 | Documents to be translated into several languages*

- Adding on to the importance of pluralism in language as Section I under Article III mentioned, in an effort to keep other languages alive we strive to translate documents, poetry, song, and other communication media into several languages to reflect the linguistic diversity of Latin America and Latinos worldwide. In addition, the translating of documents will help students practice their linguistic skills. Above all, these translated documents will help especially when we reach out to the surrounding Latin American community beyond our campus walls that may not be familiar or fully comfortable with the English language despite not being the official language it dominates.

Article IV - Civic Engagement

- *Section I | Service*

- LASU understands the importance of community service and civic engagement in the community in order to implement social change. LASU will work with established service projects at William & Mary, it will introduce service initiatives of its own, and will work with other service student organizations that pertain to the Latino community in Williamsburg.

Article V - Political Activism

- *Section I | Awareness*

- An integral component of LASU is to stimulate political awareness on various relevant subjects concerning the Latin American community, while embracing a dialogue composed of all political affiliations and perspectives.

Article VI - Membership

Membership to this organization is open to all students.

● *Section 1 | Dues*

- In order to become a full member of Latin American Student Union (LASU) a membership fee of \$10 is required for a whole year. Otherwise, if a student wants instead to be a member for only one semester, they shall pay a fee of \$7.
- Non-dues paying members may not be able to provide input in all voting decisions, for instance during elections.

● *Section 2 | Voting Rights/Privileges*

- In the case where there is a Voting tie the outgoing president shall have full veto powers to make the final decision. Any member present at the meeting shall be able to vote but voting is restricted to dues paying members during elections of officers.

Article VII - Community Building

● *Section 1 | Learning and Sharing*

- We hope that with LASU people will come together and share their experiences and take part in the experiences of others. In this way lives are enriched and we learn to make more meaningful connections with each other through the community we form. As a way of establishing this community LASU will kick off with initiation, a celebration of each other and the things to come.

Article VIII - Meetings

● *Section 1 | Order of Business*

- LASU meetings will begin with a discussion of recent club updates and upcoming events. This includes discussion of any community service projects or campus events we may want to plan. Next, we will discuss important current events that are happening in Latin American countries. Meetings will wrap up with fellowship and bonding among LASU members. Every meeting will include an open floor for any member or outside organization to promote events or their respective organizations mission.

Article IX - Financial Procedures

● *Section 1 | Money Flow*

- As stated under Section 6 of Article I, the Treasurer is in charge of keeping a detailed summary of all financial expenses (monthly budget reports and fundraiser evaluations). These expenses include but are not limited to: dues and expenses that are made toward LASU programs. The bank account will be under the name

of the President, and if possible should be made joint with the treasurer.

LASU funds will only go towards funding LASU programs/events. Personal purchases made with LASU funds are grounds for Impeachment and referral to the William and Mary Honor Council.

○ All purchases should be made through the LASU bank card and should be discussed with the exec board either formally at a meeting or through another form of communication. There must be a majority approval on expenditure. If obtaining the bank card is not feasible then a reimbursement plan shall be made with the Treasurer and President, but reimbursements shall be kept to a minimum.

Article X - Elections

● Section 1 | *The Democratic Process - Executive Board*

○ Executive Board: the Executive Board shall comprise of seven members: The President, the Vice President, the Treasurer, the Social Chair, the Marketing Chair, Service Chair, and the Secretary.

■ **Straw ballot** Send out a list of Exec Officer positions, and have each member choose one person they think would be best for the position out of entire organization.

■ **Applications or questionnaires will be sent in by interested members at least a week before elections.** Applications are used to show interest as well as a manner of presenting candidates to the entire club prior to elections. The deadline for submissions is 11:59:59 P.M. exactly one week before the election meeting.

■ **At least one non-returning Exec Board member will oversee ballots during elections.** They will be responsible of counting the ballots and announcing the winners. Overall, this member will conduct the election process.

■ **During elections any dues paying member present at the meeting can nominate another dues paying member for a position.**

Nominations must be seconded. This allows LASU members who might be potential strong leaders to be presented as possible candidates to the club.

■ **Voting by Acclamation and Challenge.** If not challenged, then there will be a “yay” or “nay” or “abstain” vote between the organization and the person would now be a part of the Executive Office – there shouldn’t be a “nay” or “abstain” since there was no challenge, but just in case. If challenged, there will be a vote between the people challenging and the slated official. Who ever wins becomes that Executive Office Position.

■ **After establishing the Executive Office – during last Exec meeting.**

After elections are held, the previous Exec Board should have mandatory “transition meetings” with the new Exec Board members to explain their positions and responsibilities (before the next LASU meeting). Current (outgoing) officers are expected to assist the new executive board accordingly.

● Section 2 | *The Appointment Process - Executive Board*

- If an executive board member discontinues their term during the semester, it is up to the discretion to the president, with the consent of the other executive board members, to appoint a dues-paid member to fill the vacancy.

Article XI- Impeachment

- *Section 1 | Procedure*

○ To impeach an executive board member you can create an anonymous write up of who you want to impeach, what position they hold, and why you want to impeach them. Write ups should be sent to the CSU box or address of the President. If the purpose of the write up is to impeach the President, it should be sent to the CSU box or address of the Vice President. The executive board member who receives the write up should bring it to the following board meeting. The executive board will vote on whether or not the reasons listed for impeachment are valid. If at least 70% of the board members vote that the reasons are valid, a vote will be held at the next general meeting where all members will vote on whether or not to impeach the board member in question. With the general members, majority rules. All votes will be done on cards where "YES to impeachment" and "NO to impeachment" and "ABSTAINING from vote" will be written. Voters should circle their selection. Before the general members vote, the person in question should be allowed up to two minutes to explain why the accusations are false or why they should not be impeached. If the board member is impeached, it will not result in removal from the club, just removal from their position on the board. If a member who has previously been impeached wishes to run for a board position in the future, they will be allowed to run again but only after an academic year has passed since their impeachment. Examples of valid reasons for impeachment include, stealing money from the club, falsifying club information, inconsistent behavior and attendance to meetings and events, failure to perform their role in LASU, and reacting in a physically or mentally violent manner towards any club member or person or organization that the club is working with.

Article XII-Ratification Process

- *Section 1 | Change*

○ This Constitution may be amended by a motion of a member of the executive board subject to approval by two-thirds majority vote of the total Club membership. This vote may be obtained by proxy. Total Club membership will comprise of all members listed on the roster who have fulfilled the requirements of Club membership (i.e. club dues) at the time the motion is made. Simple majority is necessary for a quorum.