The Preamble

We, the African students studying at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, in the United States of America, realized the need to foster unity among us, to provide a forum for dialogue, to advance for social, economic, political, cultural, spiritual and intellectual awareness and to finally chart a way the emancipation and development of the African continent hereby submit ourselves to be guided by this constitution.

Article 1: Name of the organization

The name of this organization shall be African Students Union (ASU) and hereafter it shall be referred to by its abbreviation as the ASU.

Article 2: Goals and Objectives of ASU

The main objectives of the ASU are to foster pan-African unity, promote Afro-centric intellectual orientation and to direct our energies in shaping intellectuals who will in future work toward socio-economic, politico-cultural and spiritual rebirth of the peoples of Africa. In order to achieve these objectives, ASU shall execute the following specific goals:

1) Provide a forum for exchange of ideas and development of common interests among its members.
2) Organize social and cultural activities to promote good leadership and comradeship among its members. Further, it is ASU’s duty to promote and project an authentic image of Africa and/ or Africans.
3) Provide for publication and dissemination of reliable and wholesome information on Africa to members of the public within and beyond the Greater Lansing area.
4) Advocate for academic excellence, intellectual freedom and integrity in African scholarship and research at MSU (This also applies to research conducted in Africa by MSU faculty and students).
5) Promote and support programs and projects aimed at enhancing social, political, economic, cultural, spiritual and intellectual growth for sustainable development of the mother continent.
6) Provide “African hospitality” for newly arrived African students and visiting scholars and support them throughout their stay at MSU.
7) Foster maximum cooperation with African diplomatic missions in the USA to solve problems of the continent
8) To engage in activities aiming at liberating the African mind from stereotypes of self-hatred and instilling self-worth and pride, which are necessary among our future leaders who will emerge from our student body.
Article 3: Membership

Section 1: Membership Types and Eligibility

a) There shall be two categories of membership, namely, regular and associate members.
b) Regular membership shall be open to all students who are enrolled at MSU and who have paid their ASU registration fee.
c) Associate membership shall be open to spouses and/or children (if under 16 years) of regular members.
d) MSU African faculty and staff as well as other people of African descent at MSU and in the Greater Lansing Community who pay the ASU registration fee shall satisfy the condition for regular membership.

Section 2: Voting rights

a) Regular members and associate members who paid their dues are eligible to vote in ASU elections for the new executive board or other related positions.
b) Since this is primarily a student organization, only MSU students can be voted for Executive Board positions.

Section 3: Membership Fee and Good Standing Membership

ASU membership due is $15.00 per annum. This fee is subject to change as may be deemed necessary by the Executive Board, in consultation with the general members. To be a member in good standing to requirements must be satisfied, namely:
   i) be registered at MSU or any Greater Lansing institution as either a full-time or part-time student and
   ii) must have paid dues in full
Associate members are unaffected by the first requirement (i) of this requirement of this section.

Section 4: Membership Benefits

a) Members in good standing shall receive the ASU identification cards, special publications, newsletters and announcements. Further, members may be entitled to reduced fees for the ASU’s Annual Festival and related programs.
b) Regular members in good standing are qualified for nomination to office and service on organization’s sub-committees for special assignments.
c) Regular and associate members shall receive all benefits and privileges authorized by the Executive committee and the general membership of the ASU.
d) Regular and associate members, in good standing, who have contributed toward goals and objectives of the ASU (as defined by the preamble and Article 2 of the constitution) shall qualify for annual ASU recognition or honors. The Executive Committee, in consultation with the general membership, shall decide on the criteria for selection of members for such honors, when applicable.
Article 4: Officers and Duties

Section 1: Number of Executive officers

ASU Executive Board shall be made up of 8 office bearers. Their portfolios shall be in the following ranks: President, Vice President, Secretary General, two Organizing Secretaries, General Board Member, Treasurer and Public Relations Officer.

Section 2: President

a) The President shall be the chief executive officer of the ASU and shall oversee, in general, all affairs of the organization.
b) The president shall preside at all meetings of the ASU and the Executive Board.
c) The President shall have authority to sign, execute and acknowledge, on behalf of the ASU, those instruments necessary or proper to be executed in the course of ASU’s regular business of which shall be authorized by resolution of the Executive Committee.
d) The President, in consultation with the Executive, shall make appointments to special and ad hoc committees and sub-committees created by action of the Executive Committee or general membership of the ASU.
e) The President shall perform all duties incident to the office of a President and such other duties as may be prescribed and described by the general membership of ASU from time to time.

Section 3: Vice-President

a) In the event of temporary disability of the president to perform his/her duties or during his/ her absence from any meetings of the general membership of the Executive Board, the Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President during the continuance of such temporary disability. As acting President, the Vice-President has all powers of, and is subject to all restrictions placed on the President.
b) The Vice President shall perform all other duties of the second ranking official as may be assigned to him/her by the President or the Executive Board.
c) The Vice-President shall act as the de facto chairperson of ASU and all other Board members shall report to the president through this office.
d) The Vice-President shall be the chief advisor to the president and shall be consulted in all presidential decisions and/or activities.

Section 4: General Secretary

a) The General Secretary shall keep the minutes of the Executive Committee and the general membership of the ASU.
b) He/ she shall also be responsible for all correspondences of the organization.
c) He/ she shall see to it that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and/or as required by the rules and regulations of ASU.
d) He/she shall maintain the directory of members and shall be custodian of the ASU records.
e) He/she shall certify resolutions.
f) He/she shall obtain and integrate all reports from office bearers pertaining to administration of the ASU.

Section 5: Organizing Secretaries

a) Organizing Secretary I shall be responsible for the planning and execution of social functions and related activities of the ASU
b) Organizing secretary II shall perform all duties incident to office of the first Organizing Secretary and such duties as may be assigned by the President of the organization and the Executive Board.
c) The Organizing Secretaries (I and II) shall collaborate in all the activities assigned to them and may from time to time delegate some of their responsibilities to other Board members who are available to execute such given tasks.

Section 6: General Board Member

a) The General Board Member shall be the “voice” of the portion of the ASU population that is not duly represented in the Executive Board and in other ASU activities. He/she fills in this gap in accord with the spirit of unity as enshrined in the preamble (see also article 2).
b) He/she shall be charged with recruiting the ‘non-visible’ African student population to be involved in the union’s affairs. Such target population shall be determined by the Executive Board and general members on a yearly basis.
c) Specific activities shall be assigned to him/her depending on the demography of the ASU student population in the academic year he/she is elected to office.
d) He/she shall advise the board on strategies of involving the population in (b) and serve in other board activities as may be assigned from time to time.
e) He/she shall be versatile and be capable of carrying over responsibilities of other Board members in case of temporary disability of such members. Back to top

Section 7: Treasurer

a) The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds of the ASU from any source. Further, he/she shall endorse and deposit all such funds or other depositories as shall be designated by resolution of the Executive Committee and general membership of the ASU.
b) He/she shall make payments for appropriate and authorized expenditures
c) He/she shall function as the principal accounting officer in charge of books of account, accounting records and forms for the ASU. As the principal accounting officer, he/she shall present the general membership with two written financial statements (from his/her financial books, namely ledger, journal, and cash books) at least once every term. These statements are cash account and trial balance. They should provide an authentic reflection of ASU’s assets, liabilities and equities.
d) He/she shall maintain adequate records of all assets, liabilities and transactions of the ASU.
e) He/she shall obtain from other officers all reports needed for recording and directing the accounts of ASU.
f) In addition, he/she shall perform other duties, especially finance-related, as may be delegated or assigned to him/her by the President or the general membership of the organization.

Section 8: Public Relations Officer

a) The Public Relation Officer shall be the liaison officer involved in all external affairs of the organization.
b) He/she shall present the good image of the organization to the general public, including other student organizations both within and beyond the MSU campus premises.
c) He/she shall be responsible to market ASU’s programs and disseminate information accordingly.
d) He/she shall be required to update ASU about activities of other African student unions in the US and foster collaboration whenever it is deemed necessary by the Executive Board.

Article 5: Election and Term of Office Bearers

Section 1: Election and Transfer of Duties

a) The Executive officers shall be elected at the last general meeting of ASU (i.e., at the end of the Spring Term) for one academic year.
b) Such officers are expected to appoint an Electoral Committee toward the end of their term, to relinquish their position at the end of the academic year and to transfer all ASU written documents to the incumbent officers. This includes the minutes files, financial report, reports from all Executive officers and other legal documents such as the constitution and correspondences with other external bodies.

Section 2: Terms of Office

a) The terms of the office for elected officers shall run for one academic year or until such time as their successors are elected and qualified (i.e. until their successors are sworn into office).
b) Officers shall be Regular members and in good standing (i.e. members who attended meetings regularly and have paid their registration fees dues in full) to qualify for nomination for elections to an Executive office.
c) An individual member shall not serve on the Executive Committee of ASU for more than two consecutive terms. If nominated, he/she may decline the nomination for election to an Executive office for reasons of having served in the two (2) consecutive terms.
d) A member who has not spent at least two semesters at MSU shall not qualify for nomination to an Executive office.
Section 3: Election process

a) The elections shall proceed by means of a secret ballot distributed and counted by the Electoral Committee as appointed by the out-going board.
b) Nominated candidates may be asked, when necessary, to canvass for their positions. Where there is a tally the candidates may be publicly interviewed before a second round of voting is carried out.

Article 6: Code of Conduct

Section 1: Resignation

a) In the event where an officer wishes to relinquish his/her post, he/she shall submit a written letter of resignation stating his/her reasons for such a choice to the President, who in turn, shall present the matter to the general membership at the immediate or regular (whichever comes first) meeting of the ASU.
b) The general membership and/or the Executive Board shall scrutinize and analyze the reasons for resignation. The matter will be reviewed in terms of:
   i) The officer/s’ initial objectives for accepting such an office;
   ii) The resigning officer/s’ effort to contribute toward fulfillment of goals and objectives of the ASU as stated in the preamble and Article 2 of the constitution.
c) Should the findings and verdict, based on the format outlined in the preceding paragraph (i.e. Article 6, Section 2, paragraph (a)), justify the officer(s)’ resignation, the president is required to give an account to the house as to the nature and reasons for such a deviation and violation of principles, aims and objectives of the ASU. Depending on the seriousness of the case, in terms of the degree to which it undermines the Goals and Objectives of ASU (Article 2), the president may be excluded from his/her office for failure to recognize malpractice - as the organization’s highest ranking office bearing.

Section 2: Grievance Procedure

a) An officer (or any general member) has the right to press charge(s) against another officer or the entire Executive, in cases of malpractice or abuse of the ASU principles.
b) A charge of this nature shall be presented through the President or Vice-President to the general membership. If the President fails to accept the case and to consider it to be redressed by the general membership, an ad hoc commission of inquiry, comprising of members in good standing will be nominated by the general membership to investigate and report back to the organization forthwith.

Section 3: Absenteeism
a) Officers shall not be absent from Executive Board meetings and general meetings without prior written notice to the Executive Board through the General Secretary.
b) A three day written notice is required.

Section 4: Loyalty, Dedication and Punctuality

ASU values loyalty, dedication and punctuality. Any breach of these values will be subjected to penalties as described in Section 4. Back to top

Section 5: Penalties

a) An officer shall be dismissed for any proven case of misadministration, incompetence, fraud, inactivity, insubordination, or for any reason deemed cogent by the general membership of ASU.
b) Dismissal may be preceded by warning and suspension depending on the severity of the organizational misdemeanor.
c) In seeking to dismiss an officer from office, a formal motion shall be made at a meeting of the general membership of the ASU. The motion shall be debated by the general membership if, and only if, the motion is duly seconded by one other member. At least one of the two members proposing the dismissal of the officer shall be a regular member in good standing.
d) The officer whose removal from office is sought shall have the right to a hearing by the general membership at the same meeting in which the motion for dismissal is made.
e) In the event that an officer, whose dismissal is sought, is absent at a particular meeting (i.e. the meeting at which his/her case is introduced), it shall be the duty of the Secretary General to serve him/her with a written notice to the effect that he should appear before the membership at the next meeting.
f) If the officer whose dismissal is sought, is absent after a written notice has been served on him/her (and there is evidence that he/she received the notice and failed to inform the general membership/ ad hoc committee/ Secretary General in writing as to why he/she will not appear before the meeting, for which he/she had been summoned), he/she shall be deemed to have committed a contempt of the general membership and shall be summarily dismissed without further hearing. Back to top

Section 6: Replacement of Officers

a) An emergency by-election shall be held to fill a vacant post at the next meeting of the general membership. Such a vacancy may be created by unforeseen circumstances such as: death, dismissal, sudden need to leave the area etc.
b) An officer elected through by-election shall serve the remaining portion of the term of office of the officer he/she replaced.

Section 7: End of Term Reports
a) Each and every officer shall prepare a coherent typewritten report at the end of his/her term of office or upon resignation or dismissal from office.
b) Accompanying this form, outgoing officers shall collectively submit a brief typewritten evaluation form, with structured with closed-ended questions which will be distributed to the general membership for feedback.
c) These documents, together with all properties of ASU Executive members’ possession, must be submitted before the end of the academic year and election of new office bearers and kept as future record for the incumbent executive.
d) Should the general membership be dissatisfied with an officer’s report or any portion of it, the general membership shall require the office to revise and resubmit the report for approval at the next meeting of the general membership of the ASU. 

Article 7: Meetings Procedures

Section 1: General Meetings

There shall be at least two meetings of the membership during each academic term. At least one of such meetings shall be at the beginning and one at the end of the term. The venue of the meetings shall be decided upon by the Executive Board.

Section 2: Special/ Emergency Meetings

The Executive Committee may, upon a written petition by not less than ten regular members (in good standing), file with the Secretary General, convene special or emergency meeting(s) for the general membership, provided the agenda of such meeting(s) of the general membership, provided the agenda of such meeting(s) shall be restricted to the objectives that prompted such need(s). Nothing herein shall be constructed as limiting the authority of the regular Executive Board to convene meetings of the Standing Committee for the advancement of goals and objectives of ASU.

Section 3: Executive Board Meetings

The Executive Board shall meet at least three times every term and at such other times and places as the President or three members of the Executive, (by notice to the Secretary General) shall request.

Section 4: Condition for Meetings

a) At general meetings, one third (1/3) of the regular members (in good standing) shall constitute a quorum.
b) A quorum of the Executive Board for the purpose of transacting ASU business shall consist of three or more office bearers.

Section 5: Chairing and meeting routine
The following shall govern the ASU meeting proceedings:

a) The agenda for the meetings shall be distributed in advance by the General Secretary, in consultation with the meeting chair and/or the President.
b) The meeting chair shall be guided by the following general procedure:
   i) Calling the meeting to order.
   ii) Reading/distributing the agenda.
   iii) Requesting modification/secondment of the agenda (or its items)
   iv) Facilitating adoption of the minutes and discussion on matters arising from them and their ratification as the binding official documents of ASU.
   v) Introducing items for discussion (and asking for their secondment) as stated in the agenda.
   vi) Eliciting comments and giving all members equal space to air their views.
   vii) Calling discussants to strictly adhere to the agenda and respond to exigencies (points of order).
   viii) Ensuring that meetings end at stipulated times.

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Article 8: Standing Committees

Section 1: Nature of the committees

The Executive Committee shall establish the following standing committees:

a) Electoral Committee consisting of at least three regular members (in good standing) to recommend policy and conduct elections and by-elections of the ASU and other such duties as may be assigned by the Executive Board and the general membership.
b) Social welfare committee consisting of at least five regular members (in good standing) to provide “hospitality” for new African students and visiting scholars. Further, to recommend policy as well as help plan and execute all social, educational and cultural activities.
c) Publicity Committee consisting of at least five members to recommend policy and manage the publicity/publication operations of the ASU and other such duties as may be assigned by the Executive Committee.
d) Finance Committee consisting of five regular members to develop proposals to the Executive Board and the general membership for fund-raising programs and to help collect dues, levies and contributions for the ASU.
e) Audit Committee consisting of three regular members to review and certify the financial records of ASU.
f) Academic and Professional Improvement Committees comprising at least five members to recommend policy and conduct activities related to academic and professional improvement of members of ASU.
g) Membership Committee consisting of at least three members to develop proposals for retention and recruitment of all approved categories of members.
h) Counseling Committee consisting of at least five people—including three past Executive Members of ASU and two MSU (African or Africanist) faculty members with several years of outstanding record of teaching and/or research in Africa—to recommend policy, and counsel with the ASU. Further, counsel committee shall be a liaison between ASU and MSU and perform such duties as may be assigned by the Executive Board and the general membership of the ASU. Back to top

Section 2: Conditions for Appointments to Standing Committees

a) Members in good standing committees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee in consultation with the general membership of ASU.

b) The standing committee shall serve for one year unless the period of service is altered by the Executive Committee and the general membership.

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Article 9: Finance, Appropriations and Expenses

Section 1: Budget approval

The Executive Board and the general membership shall approve budget for the ASU, which approval shall constitute authorization for expenditure.

Section 2: Fundraising

The ASU reserves the right to raise funds by membership fees and dues; donations, endowments, and subsidies from acceptable sources; and by levies approved by the general membership. Back to top

Section 3: Petty Cash

The Treasurer shall maintain a petty cash or not more than $50.00 (fifty dollars) at a time. This cash shall be used to cover administrative expenses incurred. Records of all transactions must be kept by this officer.

Section 4: Signatories

The ASU shall keep a current bank account and signatories to that account shall be the President and Treasurer. The President and the Treasurer shall be the joint signatories for withdrawal of funds authorized by Executive Board and/or the general membership of ASU. Back to top

Article 10: Amendment of the Constitution

Section 1: Proposal for Amendment
A motion for the amendment of any part or the whole of this constitution, namely in the form of addition, deletion, restatement, correction etc. shall be made in writing to the Executive through the Secretary General.

Section 2: Discussion on Amendment

The Executive shall present such motion to the general membership at its next meeting and the motion shall be debated if, and only if, the proposed amendment is seconded by another member. One of the two members proposing the motion must be a regular member in good standing. Such a motion shall pass by an affirmative vote by a majority of the general membership. Back to top

Article 11: Disclaimer

This organization will not discriminate on the basis age, color, gender, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight. Back to top