

# Bengali Association of Pittsburgh

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## Constitution

### Article I - Name and Objective

#### 1.1 Name

The name of the organization shall be Bengali Association of Pittsburgh, hereafter referred to as “BAP” or “the association”.

#### 1.2 Character

BAP shall be a cultural, non-political and non-profit organization registered in the state of Pennsylvania.

#### 1.3 Registered Office

The registered office of the association shall be decided by the executive committee for every fiscal year. A fiscal year shall begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March and end on the last day of February of the following year.

#### 1.4 Vision

The vision of the association is to become a leading beacon of Bengali language, literature, art and culture in the states of Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio.

#### 1.5 Mission

- To promote Bengali language, literature, art and culture
- To create cross cultural interaction and appreciation of diverse cultures
- To engage in cultural exchanges with like-minded organizations
- To participate in social welfare activities
- To encourage participation of youth in the activities of the association

### Article II - Membership

#### 2.1 Membership

Any person, who is over the age of 18, interested in Bengali language and culture, may become a member of BAP on payment of the membership fee. Membership shall be valid for the current fiscal year and subject to subsequent renewals.

There shall be four types of membership:

1. Single
2. Student (Full time student / Post doctoral fellow)
3. Family - defined as the member, the spouse, dependent children and dependent parents (living with the member at the same address or at a managed care facility)

4. Student family – defined as a family where either both adults are students (Full time student / Post doctoral fellow) or one adult is a student and the other adult is a homemaker. It includes dependent children and dependent parents (living with the member at the same address or at a managed care facility).

The executive committee shall decide the annual membership fee amount for each category of membership and the due date for the current fiscal year. Notification of the membership dues shall be provided to the members of the immediate past year by the executive committee at least two weeks prior to the due date.

Membership dues, once paid, shall not be refundable.

At least two thirds of the membership present in a duly convened general body meeting can terminate the membership of any member whose activities are considered to be improper or whose activities are considered to be detrimental or subversive to the mission of the association.

## **2.2 Eligibility to vote**

Members shall be eligible to vote in the election of the president of the executive committee, run for office themselves, and participate in the voting to amend the constitution, provided they have been members for at least 1 year on the day of the election or amendment.

A member and spouse under family membership or student family membership category shall be allowed to cast one vote each. A single or a student member shall be allowed to cast one vote. A vote can only be cast in person. Dependent parents and children shall not have any voting privilege.

## **Article III General Body Meetings**

Annual general body meeting of the association shall be held during Saraswati Puja each year.

Additional general body meetings may be held as decided by the executive committee.

All BAP members shall be informed of the general body meeting at least ten days prior to the meeting.

A group of members with a signed consent of at least one third of the membership may petition the executive committee for a general body meeting. The executive committee shall call the meeting within thirty days of the receipt of the petition. If the executive committee fails to convene such a meeting in due time, an emergency meeting may be called by one third of the members by notifying the membership of the association directly.

All meetings shall be called by the secretary.

Quorum necessary for a general body meeting shall be at least one-third of the membership of BAP.

## **Article IV Executive Committee**

### **4.1 Structure**

The executive committee shall manage the activities of the organization for one fiscal year.

All executive committee members must have been members of the association for at least one full year on the day of the election and must be a member for the year they serve.

The executive committee shall consist of eight members including three officers: a president, a secretary and a treasurer.

The president of the executive committee shall be elected once a year at the annual general body meeting of the association members, which shall be held during Saraswati Puja. The president of the executive committee shall then select other committee members including officers.

The outgoing executive committee shall deliver to its successor all official materials by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

In the event of a vacancy arising in the executive committee, the executive committee shall nominate any eligible member of the association to fill that vacancy for the remainder of the term.

The executive committee shall be responsible for completing an audit of its finances and filing tax documents on time as required by law for the fiscal year it serves.

The executive committee shall employ modern means to communicate efficiently and on time. The executive committee shall make these by-laws and the contact information of the executive committee members accessible to all members of the association at all times.

#### **4.2 Executive Committee meetings**

The executive committee meetings shall be called by the secretary in consultation with the president as and when necessary.

The presence of a minimum of five executive committee members including at least one officer shall constitute the quorum.

A simple majority of the members present shall be enough to pass a resolution. In the event of a tie, the presiding officer shall have the power to cast an additional vote as the deciding vote.

Notice of an executive committee meeting shall be given at least seven days in advance. An emergency meeting of the executive committee may be called with 24 hours notice by any officer or by any five members of the executive committee by informing all members of the executive committee.

#### **4.3 Duties:**

##### ***The President***

1. Shall preside over all meetings of the association including the executive committee meetings.
2. Shall coordinate the work of the other executive committee members to further the objectives of the association.
3. Shall act as a spokesperson and represent the association in inter-organizational matters and shall keep other executive committee members abreast on those matters.

### *The Secretary*

1. Shall record the minutes of all meetings of the executive committee as well as general meetings.
2. Shall be responsible for all correspondence and non financial record keeping.
3. Shall perform all other duties as delegated by the president.
4. Shall perform the duties of the president in his/her absence.

### *The Treasurer*

1. Shall have custody of all the funds.
2. Shall keep a full and accurate account of the receipts and expenditures, make disbursements in accordance with the budget as approved by the executive committee and present an updated financial statement of the association to the executive committee when requested by the committee.
3. Shall present a financial statement to the general membership at the annual general body meeting held during Saraswati Puja and at other times as decided by the executive committee.
4. Shall perform the duties of the President in the absence of the president and the Secretary.

### *Other executive committee members*

1. Shall assist the president in organizing the social and cultural events, community service activities, fund raising and other activities as decided by the executive committee.

## **Article V Advisory Council**

### **5.1 Goal**

- Uphold the vision and the by-laws of the association
- Develop leadership within BAP
- Conduct the election process
  - The council, with the help of the present executive committee, shall conduct the election process by requesting nomination from members of the association for election of the president of the executive committee for the next fiscal year.

The council shall have neither day-to-day executive function nor shall have any responsibility for the executive duties.

### **5.2 Composition**

The advisory council shall consist of five persons - three of whom are to be elected from the members of the association who have served as an officer of BAP for at least one full term. The fourth position shall be elected from any member of BAP, who is eligible to become a member of the Executive Committee as defined in section 4.1. The fifth person shall be the immediate past president. In case the immediate past president is not available to serve in the advisory council, any member of BAP may be elected, who is eligible to become a member of the Executive Committee as defined in section 4.1.

In the event of a vacancy arising in the advisory council, the vacancy shall be filled for the remainder of the term by cooption from among eligible members of the association. The Chair of the advisory council shall be elected by the members of the council by annual rotation.

### **5.3 Election and Retirement**

Two of the elected members of the advisory council shall retire and be replaced every year through an election held during the annual general body meeting of the association members on the day of Saraswati Puja. A member of the advisory council shall serve for a term of two consecutive years except that the first advisory council shall decide which two of its members shall retire at the end of the first year.

### **5.4 Meetings of the Advisory Council**

The advisory council shall meet at least once in a year. The council's meetings shall have a quorum of three of its members. The chair shall convene and preside over the meetings of the advisory council.

### **Article VI Amendments**

These by-laws may be amended or new ones added in a duly convened general body meeting, only by at least two-thirds majority vote of the members present.

The executive committee may initiate any amendments it deems necessary for better functioning of BAP.

A group of members, with a signed consent of a third of the total membership, may petition the executive committee for an amendment. The executive committee shall formally initiate the amendment process within thirty days of the receipt of the request by notification of the proposed amendment to all members and shall convene a general body meeting within thirty days of the notification to discuss the same.

### **Article VII Finances**

The association shall keep its funds in a bank. The president, the secretary and the treasurer may sign checks on the said bank accounts of the association.

The treasurer shall present an updated financial statement of the association to the executive committee when requested by the committee.

The treasurer shall present a financial statement of the association to the general membership at the annual general body meeting held during Saraswati Puja and at other times as decided by the executive committee.

The financial records shall be audited once at the end of the fiscal year.

If the association disbands, the assets of the association shall be transferred to an organization with similar purposes chosen by the association membership at a duly convened general body meeting called specially for this purpose.