



Pittsburgh Fencing Association

Constitution and Operations Manual

This document is intended as a guideline for the operation of the Pittsburgh Fencing Association.

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1. Name of Organization

Pittsburgh Fencing Association (PFA)

2. Acceptance and Compliance to Registration Requirements and Limitations

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association and its membership accept and will fully comply with the requirements and limitations of registration.

3. Limits of Registration

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association and its membership accept and will fully comply with the limits of registration.

4. Annual Reregistration

Pittsburgh Fencing Association will submit its annual re-registration application during the re-registration period following the election of new officers

5. Purpose

The purpose of the Pittsburgh Fencing Association is to teach the sport of fencing to University of Pittsburgh students, and to compete at local, collegiate and national level events. We also encourage our members to take part in other aspects of the sport of fencing, including armory and refereeing.

6. Activities

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association operates both beginner's and veteran's fencing training. Beginner's training is run for the first 4 to 6 weeks (the exact length is at the discretion of the Club President), during which time separate veteran's training is run simultaneously. After the first 4 to 6 weeks all fencers train together. These practices are offered twice a week.

Open bouts are also offered by the Pittsburgh Fencing Association. For the first 4 to 6 weeks open bouts are limited to veteran fencers only. After the first 4 to 6 weeks all active club members are welcome. Open bouts are also offered twice a week. Open bouts are self-refereed, giving members a chance to learn how to referee the different weapons of fencing.

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association also goes to several club team tournaments. These include SAC North, SAC Championships, and USACFC National Championships.

7. Membership Requirements

Membership is open to currently enrolled Pitt students as defined herein.

All members must accept and comply with all of the requirements and limitations of registration as a condition of membership.

Membership in the Pittsburgh Fencing Association is voluntary and all risk of personal injury, property damage or other losses that occur incidental to membership or participation in activities are assumed solely by the student organization and/or individual member(s) or non-member participant(s). Accordingly, the University of Pittsburgh, its officers and agents shall not be responsible nor liable for any claims or causes of action for damage or loss of property or personal injury of any kind or nature which may arise out of or are incidental to the conduct of any organization's activities or that of any individual's participation in any group-related activity. It is further understood and agreed that it is the responsibility of the officers of the organization to assure that all of the organization's members and non-member participants in all activities sponsored by the Pittsburgh Fencing Association are fully informed and advised of this ASSUMPTION OF RISK, and in the event any individual member or participant should express or indicate non-acceptance, the organization's officers shall forbid participation and/or membership of such individual. In regard to the organization member or non-member participant Assumption of Risk, the Pittsburgh Fencing Association acknowledges that the University recommends that the organization members and non-member participants make every effort to arrange for the acquisition of liability insurance sufficient to protect all participants against those risks being assumed. For sport-related organizations, the University recommends that each individual have insurance sufficient to allow for any risks by participation, accident or by deficiencies in physical health.

No hazing or illegal discriminatory criteria for membership, including those listed in the University of Pittsburgh's non-discrimination policy, will be used as a condition for membership in the organization. These factors include race, color, religion (except for religious organizations which may restrict membership to those who share their faith-based beliefs), national origin, ancestry, sex (except same sex organizations permitted under Title IX), age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability or status as a veteran. This non-discriminatory policy will be applied in a manner consistent with the requirements of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and other laws applicable to student organizations.

7.1. Financial obligations

Member dues are subject to change from year to year, via the outlined procedure of constitutional changes. New members to the club will get 3 weeks before being required to pay dues. Currently, dues are as follows: new members to the club (regardless of prior fencing experience) will pay \$35/\$60 for semester/year respectively. Veterans returning to the club will pay \$40/\$70 semester/year respectively. Officers pay \$25/\$50 semester/year respectively. All members and Associate Members are required by USFA Safe Sport Policy to have AT LEAST the USFA Non-Competitive Membership of \$10 (subject to change). Associate Members will be charged \$10 floor per bouting practice if they have not paid dues. Money paid towards floor fees are not considered money towards dues.

Nonrefundable fees may be charged by PFA to cover transportation costs not already covered by Allocations, and will be required 3 weeks before the date of the tournament. Costs will be shared evenly between all members who go on that trip.

Officers listed on insurance, typically President, both Vice-Presidents and Business Manager, are required by USFA Safe Sport Policy to have USFA Professional Membership. Those officers may be reimbursed by the club for the cost of this membership.

8. Membership Procedures

Members are recruited through the University of Pittsburgh fall Activities Fair, word of mouth and our website. Any person who meets the membership criterion outlined in the Membership Requirements section may participate in Pittsburgh Fencing Association practices and events. Members may lose their right to participate as part of the Disciplinary Actions outlined in the Bylaws.

8.1. Sportsmanship

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association is dedicated to fostering an all-inclusive environment. All members recognize that while in practice and competition, their conduct represents the Pittsburgh Fencing Association. As such, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of sportsmanship. Any fencer violating this standard shall be subject to the Disciplinary Actions outlined in the Bylaws.

8.2. “Active Members”

An Active Member is defined as someone in good standing with the Club (including having paid dues for the current semester or year, unless this person is an officer of the Club) who attends practices regularly, and/or is in regular contact with ALL officers as to absences. This definition is to protect Club operations from influence by non-participating members who would lack the knowledge of the sport required to make Club decisions.

8.3. “Captains”

An Active Member of the Club may be designated as the captain of a weapon. Captains are appointed by the officers of the Club via majority vote. Captains may be called upon to lead practice in lieu of an officer if no officer is present, willing, or able to teach. Captains are not Club officers, but accept these additional responsibilities as part of being a captain.

9. Voting Privileges

Voting privileges are limited to currently enrolled Pitt student members in good standing with the organization. Additionally, voting privileges are limited to those who are Active Members within the organization. Voting privileges are lost with loss of Active Member status, through Disciplinary Action, or with loss of Pitt student status.

10. Associate Membership

Because the Pittsburgh Fencing Association is self-coached, we take every opportunity possible to fence with members of the wider Fencing community. An Associate Member is defined as any University Faculty, Staff or Alumni, as well as any non-University affiliate. Associate Members are encouraged to participate as enrichment for the programs we offer to our University student members. Associate Members can become members, maintain membership,

and be removed from membership follows the same procedures as non-associate members, as outlined in the Membership Requirements and Membership Procedures sections. Associate members may not vote, hold office, nor serve in a formal leadership role. They may participate in organization meetings and activities. Pitt student membership shall comprise of at least 75% of the total membership at all times. Associate members are not permitted to attend Tuesday/Thursday practices until after the completion of the Beginner's Training Course in the fall semester, unless specifically exempted (i.e. they are actively coaching and assisting).

11. Officers

The organization shall have the following officers: President, two Vice Presidents, Business Manager, Fundraising Manager, Armorers, and Inventory Manager. All officers must be currently enrolled Pitt students. Faculty, staff, alumni, and external affiliates may NOT serve as officers.

12. Terms of Office

All officers are elected at the spring meeting, which occurs on the Saturday before finals week. The terms of all officers start at this spring meeting and end at the following spring meeting. Previous officers may be asked to assist new officers over the summer, if necessary.

13. Officer Responsibilities and Duties

All official correspondence with University officials will be signed and approved by all officers. In the event of a vote by officers, for whatever reason, all abstain votes are considered votes for status quo. In the event of a tie, status quo.

13.1. President

Handles communication with WPA Division, community members, and university administration. Handles all tasks relating to Club publicity. Responsible for representing and defending the interests of the organization to University officials during any judicial proceeding or inquiry. In charge of renting space for first meeting of the school year (Bellefield Gym), for practice (Trees Racquetball Courts), and for any miscellaneous scrimmages and/or tournaments. In charge of running footwork as well as warm-up drills. Has the right to delegate tasks to other available members/officers. Assists other officers with anything as necessary.

13.2. Vice Presidents

One Vice President is in charge of organizing the Clubs attendance at the USACFC National Championships and any other external tournaments, while the other Vice President is in charge of organizing the Clubs attendance at SAC North and SAC Championships. If there is only one Vice President, the President will assume the other's roles. Duties involved in organizing Club attendance at these tournaments include allocations requests, organizing paperwork and communication for all tournaments, and coordinating travel arrangements. The Vice Presidents also ensure that fees are paid on time and team rosters for the tournaments are submitted. Vice Presidents report to the President.

13.3. Business Manager

In charge of obtaining club insurance through USFA and submitting the club budget for fall and spring of the following year. Works with armorer and inventory manager to insure budget includes money necessary for equipment orders. Go to allocations to request tournament housing and transportation (with Vice President). Involved in all club orders (e.g. personal equipment orders, club equipment orders, clothing orders, sock orders, etc.). Keeps track of club deposits and withdrawals from all accounts. Business Manager reports to President.

13.4. Fundraising Manager

In charge of organizing and executing any fundraising activities. In charge of mobilizing club members to fundraise. Acts as Club liaison to the Panther Sports Club Network (PSCN). Reports to Vice Presidents and President.

13.5. Armorers

In charge of the organization and repair of all club equipment. Must keep the fencing equipment room clean and well organized. Must maintain all club equipment, repairing things as necessary. Must work with Inventory Manager and Business Manager to ensure that all equipment required by the Club (e.g. new equipment, supplies for repairs, etc.) is obtained through club equipment orders. Usually attends budget meetings relating to equipment orders. Reports to Vice Presidents and President.

13.6. Inventory Manager

In charge of labeling and tracking all club equipment. Must keep track of the amount of repair supplies that are available. Must keep track of how many and of which specific items are functional or broken. Must ensure that all equipment that is needed is ordered in the club equipment orders (consulting with the Armorer(s) and Business Manager in the process). Usually attends budget meetings relating to equipment orders. Ensures that all Active Members of the Club have the necessary equipment for tournaments, and also ensures that all equipment taken to tournaments is returned. Reports to Vice Presidents and President.

14. Election of Officers

All officers shall be selected on a consensus basis. Active members can nominate themselves or be nominated by a third party, with the nominated person's consent, for any position. Nominations should be publicly announced at least one month in advance of the end-of-the-year meeting. However, nominations will still be accepted up to the time of the end-of-year meeting (including during the meeting). Via debate either during practice, over email or other venue for discussion, every active, student member has the right to voice concerns, ask questions and participate in the selection process. Selections will be finalized at the end-of-the-year meeting, with the meeting being the last opportunity for open debate. If consensus cannot be reached a vote will take place. Plurality wins. In the event of a tie, a committee of officers will make the final decision. An officer may only hold one officer position at any given time. There are no absentee or proxy ballots allowed for members that did not attend the end-of-the-year meeting.

15. Voting Power of Officers

All officers retain voting power for all votes.

16. Removal of Officers

Any officer may be removed from their position with a two-thirds majority vote from the other officers. In the event of the removal of an officer, it is the responsibility of the President to notify the removed officer of their removal. If the President is removed, it is the responsibility of the Business Manager to inform them of their removal. The position of a removed officer is filled following the officer vacancy procedure.

17. Vacancies

Should an officer resign, or be removed as a result of Disciplinary Action, an emergency meeting of all active student members will be called. An interim officer will be nominated at that meeting. If consensus cannot be reached a vote will take place. Plurality wins. The interim officer remains in power for the remainder of the current term unless they resign or are removed.

18. Committees

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association has no committees.

19. Meetings

There are to be two yearly meetings. The pre-semester meeting prior to the start of fall semester, and the end-of-the-year meeting at the end of spring semester. These meetings are to update all members on current Club business, introduce new Club business, select officers and vote on procedural/constitutional changes. All members (associate or student members) are allowed to attend. All active student members are strongly encouraged to make every effort to attend.

Quorum of the two yearly meetings shall be 15 active student members, including officers.

In the event that an officer resigns or is removed as a result of disciplinary action, an emergency meeting may be called. At least 3 days of notice is required for the emergency meeting, though at least one week of notice is very strongly preferred. Quorum for an emergency meeting is 10 active student members, including officers.

The chairperson of all meetings is the current President. If the President has been removed, has resigned, or is not present for any other reason the Business Manager is the chairperson of that meeting. The chairperson is the only person that may start or end a meeting, though any member can make a motion to start or end the meeting. The chairperson may participate in all meetings as an equal member. The chairperson will guide the meeting through all items on the meeting's agenda. The chairperson may offer the floor to anyone at any point, but the person to whom the floor was offered is allowed to refuse to take the floor. At any point any member of the club attending the meeting that wishes to speak may raise their hand. The

chairperson must give any member that wishes to speak the chance to speak as soon as possible after the member indicates that they wish to speak. If multiple members simultaneously indicate that they wish to speak the chairperson has the right to determine the order in which the members speak, but all of members that wish to speak must be allowed to speak before the meeting can continue onto the next topic. All members have the right to introduce motions, introduce amendments to the constitution, and request discussion at any point during the meeting. Any other Rules of Order not specified here or in the Election of Officers section should follow Robert's Rules of Order (available at <http://www.robertsrules.org>).

The agenda for any meeting will be emailed to all active student members as far in advance of the meeting as possible, preferably no less than one week's notice. Minutes from all meetings will be taken and emailed to all active student members. All active student members have the right to ask questions, voice comments/concerns and discuss the minutes for a 48 hour period after each meeting. After that period, all decisions are final and will be announced to all members.

20. Finances

Budget for each semester will be submitted one semester in advance (i.e. budget for spring 2015 was submitted in fall of 2014). The Pittsburgh Fencing Association requests budgets for SAC Championship and USACFC National Championship registration and membership fees, USFA insurance fees, and club equipment orders. The Business Manager is the primary officer to handle budgeting requests. Other unforeseen club expenses may also be added to the budget request for any semester, as determined necessary by the Business Manager and approved by the President.

Only club tournaments are permitted to be budgeted for in the Club budget. No tournament where only individuals can participate will be budgeted for.

The use of any money from the budget must be approved of by the Business Manager BEFORE the money is used.

All current officers may make allocations requests, however any and all allocations requests must have the approval of the President and Business Manager before submission. The Business Manager should be informed as to the result of the allocations process.

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association shall fully comply with the University fundraising policies and procedures for registered student organizations.

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association will not maintain an outside bank account if it receives funding from Student Government Board.

21. Publication Code

In compliance with the Publications Code for Student Organizations, all publications of the organization will comply with current copywriter laws, be distributed according to policies

and procedures, refrain from expressions that are considered obscene or libelous according to current statute, advocate or insight the material interference or physical disruption of the educational process of the peace, order and decorum of the campus, or that advocate or insight imminent, lawless action or the violent overthrow of the government and identify the organization as publisher and specify that the group is a certified student organization at the University of Pittsburgh.

22. Adviser

The Club must have a full-time Pitt faculty or staff adviser. The Club adviser may be selected and removed by a two-thirds majority vote of the officers. The Club adviser has full scrutiny over officers and operations. Additionally, the adviser consults on University procedures and guidelines.

23. External Affiliations

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association is insured by the United States Fencing Association (USFA). The local USFA division is the Western Pennsylvania Division (WPD or WPA Division). To maintain the Club's insurance with the USFA a form and \$400 payment must be submitted to the USFA each year. Additionally, all members of the club must have a non-competitive USFA membership and all officers listed on the insurance form must have a professional USFA membership in order to be eligible for insurance.

The Pittsburgh Fencing Association belongs to the South Atlantic Conference (SAC), which is a conference of collegiate fencing clubs.

24. Bylaws

24.1. SAC / USACFC team selection

All active, student members must be made aware of and agree on the finalized team selection process by no later than the second week of spring semester. Every active student member has the right to compete for one of four competitive spots on a team for the weapon of their choice. A bracket will be set up for each weapon. At the pre-announced time, the top fencers from each bracket will have earned their spot on the team. Should a fencer be in the top four in more than one weapon, that fencer has the right to choose, but will be given 48 hours from the time they are told the bracket results to pick their weapon. The spot will then be offered to the next competitor down on the bracket. All rosters **MUST** be finalized **AT LEAST** two weeks in advance of the SAC, and rosters for Nationals finalized two weeks in advance of CFCs. The fourth person in each bracket has the option to be the alternate for that team. For the SAC, each team (where team in this case means any one of the men's or women's foil, epee, or sabre teams) will decide among themselves, with the final decision made by the A-strip fencer as to a fair system of rotation for alternates. For CFCs, each team will decide among themselves how/when to rotate the alternate, with the alternate aware that, if circumstances demand it, they might not get to fence.

By consensus/vote of officers, fencers competing for SAC and CFC team spots may have participation voided. Especially in the case of the SAC, a younger, more dedicated fencer may be chosen over someone higher in the selection bracket who has not been regularly attending. This will better serve the interest of the Club by granting tournament experience to someone who will use it to strengthen future Club performance and programs.

24.2. Disciplinary Action

For any PFA fencer black-carded at a USFA, CFC or SAC event, their continued membership in the club will be subject to review by a committee of club officers. The same shall apply to any fencer caught hazing or harassing any other participant in a PFA program. If a fencer backs out of a tournament last-minute (defined as the night before or morning of an event), that fencer is put on probation for the next event. Should that fencer continue to confirm and then back out of events, team captains have the right to exclude that fencer from competing for a SAC/CFC team. Backing out of a tournament at the last minute due to injury or other extenuating circumstances (as determined by a consensus of officers) are not subject to this policy. Should any participant in a PFA event or program be continually disruptive to the function or running of that event/program, they may be asked to leave or suspended from the Club by a consensus of officers.

25. Amendments

The constitution is designed to be a guideline. It is not set in stone. Any proposed change must be announced both via email and in practice. Any member has the right to voice concerns and ask questions. Via consensus, the proposed change will be written up as a supplement to the constitution and be in effect one month after the initial announcement. Changes included the supplement can then be voted in to permanence at either the end-of-year or pre-semester meetings. To be voted in, a change must garner a two-thirds majority in favor of adoption in a vote of all active student members attending the meeting. All constitution additions, revisions and deletions must be reported to the SORC.