

## **Bylaws of the Speakers Trust Fund, Penn State Law**

as amended on April 8, 2022

### **I. Mission Statement**

The name of this organization shall be the Speakers Trust Fund of the Student Bar Association. The Speakers Trust Fund of the Student Bar Association shall provide a forum for the equitable distribution of the Speakers Trust portion of the Student Activities Fee. It shall maintain an open door policy for every student organization and every member of the student body at Penn State Law of the Pennsylvania State University. The Trust shall promulgate an agenda for the student body that shall include, but not be limited to, providing students with a slate of speakers that will enhance the quality of life at the school and encourage diversity of ideas.

The Speakers Trust shall review student organization and individual student proposals for speakers in an objective, nondiscriminatory manner. It shall encourage student organizations and individual students to sponsor speakers of premier quality and esteem with various backgrounds and experiences to reflect the growingly diverse student body. While student organizations and members of the student body may invite speakers with controversial, and even offensive, ideologies, the Trust does not necessarily endorse these speakers.

The Speakers Trust shall also sponsor speakers on its own. The Trust shall strive to invite speakers who contribute to the stimulation and diversity of ideas and who are of interest to a majority of the student body. The speakers invited personally by the Trust will not be offensive in nature.

### **II. Definitions**

1. **Nominate:** To propose by name as a candidate for election. Each nominee must be approved by the Student Bar Association before assuming the respective position.
2. **Appoint:** A binding selection by the Student Bar Association for an office or position in the Speakers Trust.

### **III. Officers of the Trust**

The Trust shall have as its administrative and executive officers a President, Vice-President, and Secretary.

#### **1. PRESIDENT**

- A. The President of the Speakers Trust shall be nominated by the SBA President and appointed through the majority consent of the SBA, and serve at the SBA President's pleasure. The term of office shall be for one academic year. The President shall:
  - i. preside over all meetings;
  - ii. set the date, time, place, and agenda for all meetings;
  - iii. appoint any such sub-committees deemed necessary to effectuate the purpose of the Trust;
  - iv. examine, on a yearly basis, the feasibility of an increase in the Speakers Trust portion of the student fee and report these findings to the SBA President; and,
  - v. vote in all actions undertaken by the Trust.

## 2. VICE-PRESIDENT

- A. The Vice-President shall be nominated by the SBA President upon the recommendation of the President of the Speakers Trust and shall be appointed through the majority consent of the SBA. The Vice-President shall serve at the pleasure of the President of the Speakers Trust. The term of office shall be one academic year. The Vice-President shall:
- i. assist the President in his or her duties;
  - ii. assume the duties of the President in the President's absence;
  - iii. inform Student Services and the Career Planning and Development Office of events that Speakers Trust has approved and funded;
  - iv. maintain the Speakers Trust budget by keeping a record of:
    - a. the Speakers Trust finances including the yearly budget,
    - b. the amount of funds approved for each event,
    - c. the amount of funds that have been expended for events,
    - d. the amount of funds that have been recaptured, and
    - e. the amount remaining in the Speakers Trust budget;
  - v. certify all requests for disbursement made by the Trust; and
  - vi. vote in all actions undertaken by the Trust.

## 3. SECRETARY

- A. The Secretary of the Speakers Trust shall be nominated by the SBA President upon the recommendation of the President of the Speakers Trust and shall be appointed through the majority consent of the SBA. The term of office shall be one year. The Secretary shall serve at the pleasure of the President of the Speakers Trust. The Secretary shall:
- i. record the proceedings of all meetings of the Trust;
  - ii. publish and make available the minutes of all meetings to all members of the Trust, the Dean and Associate Dean for Student Affairs of Penn State Law, and the Finance Officer for Penn State Law;
  - iii. publish the minutes of all meetings to the Speakers Trust website;
  - iv. publish and record all requests for disbursement made by the Trust;
  - v. maintain the Speakers Trust webpage, so as to ensure that the students of Penn State Law have a source of information on the makeup, purpose, rules, and the application process for funds of the Speakers Trust; and,
  - vi. vote in all actions undertaken by the Speakers Trust.

## IV. Board of Trustees

1. The Trust shall be governed by a board of trustees in conformity herein:
  - A. The SBA President shall serve as Chair of the Board;
  - B. The SBA Treasurer shall serve as Vice-Chair of the Board;
  - C. The Chair and Vice-Chair will oversee the activities of the Trust, but will not serve in an administrative capacity.
  - D. Each class shall be represented by two Trustees. The Trustees shall be selected from the general student body of Penn State Law. The President of the Speakers Trust shall send out an e-mail prior to the first SBA meeting of the Fall semester soliciting interest in joining Speakers Trust to the general student body. If there are multiple students

interested in the position, the President shall select the first two people from each class who responded to the initial e-mail.

2. Selections for the trustees and officers of the Speakers Trust shall be made in accordance herein:
  - A. Nominations for the representative trustees of the second- and third-year classes shall be made no later than May 1 of each year and shall be put to a vote of the Student Bar Association either before cessation of the Spring semester or at the first meeting of the Student Bar Association in the subsequent academic year.
  - B. Nominations for the Trustees representing the first-year class shall be made no later than September 15 of each year, and put to a vote of the SBA at its next scheduled meeting.
  - C. Nominations for the Officers of the Speakers Trust shall be made no later than May 1 of each year and shall be put to a vote of the Student Bar Association at the final SBA meeting of the academic year or at the first meeting of the Student Bar Association in the subsequent academic year.
  - D. Nominations shall be taken for trustees (individuals may nominate themselves or others). The SBA Treasurer shall collect all nominations and present to the SBA a slate of candidates. All nominations, however, must be provided to and considered by the SBA.
  - E. The Speakers Trust officers shall be afforded an opportunity to make recommendations in this open forum.
  - F. A simple majority vote of the SBA is necessary to appoint the Trustees and Officers.
  - G. Once selected, each representative shall have one vote in all matters pertaining to the Speakers Trust.
  
3. Removal of Officers and Trustees
  - A. The basis for removal shall be the substantial violation of any provision of this Constitution or the neglect or refusal to perform their official responsibilities and duties
  - B. Two (2) absences per semester from regularly scheduled Speakers Trust meetings which are deemed unexcused by the Speakers Trust President shall constitute neglect to perform the duties of the Speakers Trust office and shall make that trustee subject to sanctions provided by these Bylaws.
  - C. The President has discretion to excuse one (1) absence each semester for legitimate reasons.
  - D. An excused absence must be requested by the Board Member or Trustee and granted by the President prior to the start of the Speakers Trust meeting from which the Board Member or Trustee seeks to be excused.

The President has the discretion to determine whether an absence shall be excused.

- E. Officers and Trustees of the Speakers Trust may be removed upon motion, which must be seconded. If seconded, the motion will be sent to the SBA for a vote at the next SBA meeting. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of the SBA must vote to remove the Officer.
- F. Due process requirements of notice, opportunity to hear the charges against him or her, and opportunity to answer those charges and to obtain witnesses to testify on his or her behalf shall be guaranteed to any Trustee charged with a violation of these By-Laws. However, failure or refusal to accept notice, to attend a hearing, or to participate therein does not bar removal.
- G. For any removal, the Secretary shall within twenty-four (24) hours give written notice to the individual up for removal about the motion to remove, as well as the decision of the vote of the SBA on the motion to remove.
- H. The President of Speakers Trust, in collaboration with the SBA President and Treasurer, will appoint a member of the student body to fill the vacancy. The President of Speakers Trust shall fill vacant positions within two (2) weeks of any vacancy. Appointees serve at the discretion of the President of the SBA and are also subject to removal.

## V. Meetings

- 1. The Speakers Trust shall meet no less than six (6) times during an academic year.
- 2. Meetings shall be held during the months of September, October, November, February, March, and April.
- 3. The Speakers Trust reserves the right to hold additional meetings when circumstances deem necessary.
- 4. Notice of all meetings, including the current balance of the Trust, shall be given via e-mail to the "All Students" listserv at least two (2) weeks prior to all scheduled meetings to all members of the student body.

## VI. Meeting Procedure

- 1. The following guidelines shall govern each Speakers Trust meeting:
  - A. Every meeting shall begin when the President calls the meeting to order;
  - B. The Secretary must take roll and determine whether a quorum is present for voting purposes;
  - C. The President will announce all proposals for discussion at the present meeting;
  - D. The President will then ask the designated representatives of all organizations requesting funds to present such request before the Speakers Trust. Each request will be presented one after another;
  - E. After all representatives have presented, the President will dismiss them

- and discussion of the requests will commence;
- F. Each request will be discussed. At any time a member can move to vote on the request. Another member must second the motion;
  - G. Deliberations may be made in executive session;
    - i. All Trustees are bound by a duty of confidentiality to not disclose the nature of the vote and deliberation
    - ii. If any Trustee is a member of the executive board for the requesting organization, they must excuse themselves from the vote and deliberation
  - H. Proposals that do not obtain a majority vote will be denied;
  - I. Upon discussion of all proposals, the President will adjourn the meeting; and
  - J. Within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting being adjourned, the President of the Speakers Trust shall notify the representative of the requesting organization whether its request for funding has been approved, and if so, the funding amount provided for each request.

## VII. Voting

To vote on any matter, a quorum must be present. Two-thirds of the student members constitute a quorum. Any time a vote is taken, the question shall be approved by a simple majority vote.

## VIII. Appeals Process

A requesting organization may, within 72 hours of receiving approval or denial of funds, appeal the decision of the Speakers Trust Committee. The appeals process will consist of the following:

1. Voting Members of the Board: the SBA President, the SBA Vice-President, the SBA Treasurer, the President of the Speakers Trust
  - A. The Associate Director of the Student Service's Office will also be in attendance to oversee the process.
2. The appealing student organization representative will present their grant application and basis for appeal before the Board. After the representative has presented, the President will dismiss them and discussion of the appeal will commence.
3. The Board will either affirm or overturn the decision of the Speakers Trust by a majority vote. In the case of a tie, the Associate Director of Student Services will vote.
  - A. In the event that a decision is overturned, the Board has discretion to approve a new amount to the requesting organization.

4. Within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting being adjourned, the President of the Speakers Trust shall notify the representative of the Board's decision.
  - A. The decision of the Board is final.

#### IX. Grant Application Process

In September and January of each academic year, the Speakers Trust shall make available to the entire Penn State Law community a grant application form, which will enable anyone to submit a proposal to the Speakers Trust. The grant application form shall be made available to all committee chairs and organization leaders and made available generally to the student body.

1. Grant applications must be submitted before the scheduled meeting. This deadline will be determined by the President and must be made known to the student organizations.
2. A representative from the requesting club or organization or the individual student making an application must discuss the purpose of the grant application before the Speakers Trust.
3. The grant application form will contain the following:
  - A. Requested funds;
  - B. Approximate number of attendees;
  - C. Value speaker will contribute to the student body;
  - D. Time and location of the intended assembly;
  - E. Acknowledgement that the speaker must be available to the entire student body;
  - F. Measures which will be taken to publicize speaker's attendance; and
  - G. Any other additional requirements the Speakers Trust deems necessary.

#### X. Publicity Requirements

1. The Speakers Trust shall ensure that every requesting organization or student, at a minimum:
  - A. Give the student body notice of the speaker's presentation.
    - i. The notice of the speaker's presentation must include:
      - a. time;
      - b. date; and,
      - c. location of the assembly.

- B. The notice must be posted and/or distributed in a reasonable manner so as to make the student body aware of the speaker's presentation.
- C. The Speakers Trust has the authority to determine what publicity is reasonably required to alert the student body of the speaker's presentation.
- D. The Speakers Trust also has the authority to withhold approved funds if publicity requirements are not met.

XI. Support of Student Organizations

- 1. The Speakers Trust shall:
  - A. advise all organizations and the general student body of Penn State Law on the procedures and availability of funds for inviting speakers to Penn State Law;
  - B. compile a memorandum, each academic year, to the Presidents of each student organization and the general student body on the procedure to obtain funds from the Speakers Trust;
  - C. make known to each student organization and the general student body that the Speakers Trust is available as a consultative body on all aspects of hosting and organizing speakers;
  - D. present to each PSL organization and the general student body, once a semester, a copy of the Speakers Trust Memorandum on Hosting Speakers, the bylaws of the Speakers Trust, and all forms necessary to host a speaker.

XII. Fees, Dues, Political Contributions, Donations, etc.

- 1. The Speaker's Trust will not allocate funds directly to charities. The Speaker's Trust, however, may fund incidentals to an event whose proceeds go to charity.
- 2. The Speaker's Trust shall not allocate funds that may potentially contribute to political parties or campaigns.

XIII. Student Organizations and individual students seeking funding must follow these steps throughout the allocation process:

- 1. Unused allocated funds for a specific event will be placed back into the Speaker's Trust general fund if the funds are not reallocated through the reallocation process. Typically the Speaker's Trust will exercise this recapture provision at the conclusion of the first semester or if the group or student has failed to submit the appropriate forms within seven (7) business days of the event. Student groups or the individual student will be informed by the Speaker's Trust of the proposed action and will have five (5) business days to file a grievance.

XIV. Amendments

- 1. All amendments to these bylaws shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the SBA.