

# **Student Association for Fire Ecology**

## **National Chapter Constitution**

Ratified by SAFE Membership, 10 February 2011

### **Article I – Name and Identity:**

Section 1. This organization's name is the Student Association for Fire Ecology (SAFE).

Section 2a. Logo:



Section 2b. Use of Logo: The use of the SAFE logo is prohibited for any function other than a SAFE/AFE approved activity. All uses of the SAFE logo shall require approval of the National SAFE Chapter Officers. Any use of the SAFE logo for personal financial gain is prohibited and any proceeds from the use of the SAFE logo shall go to National SAFE, recognized local Chapters of SAFE, or to AFE to support SAFE.

Section 3a. Affiliation: SAFE is a Student Section of the Association for Fire Ecology (AFE) whose primary objective and purpose is “to promote the application of fire ecology through science and education” (AFE Bylaws Article2, section 1).

Section 3b. Membership Dues: Membership in the Association for Fire Ecology, SAFE's parent organization, is a prerequisite for membership in SAFE. A member of AFE who is enrolled as a full-time or part-time student at an accredited degree-granting institution, and who thus identifies himself or herself when joining AFE, shall be automatically considered a member of SAFE.

Section 4. Representation on AFE Board of Directors: In the interest of maintaining a permanent student voice on the Board of Directors of the Association for Fire Ecology, SAFE is granted one vote on the AFE Board. Whereas previously the two SAFE Co-Chairs together constituted one vote, henceforth SAFE representation on the AFE Board shall consist of the President and Vice President. To ensure the representation of SAFE on the AFE Board the President or Vice President may designate another National SAFE officer as a substitute in AFE Board meetings or votes should either be unable to attend these functions.

### **Article II-Purpose and Objectives**

Section 1. Purpose Statement: The purpose of the Student Association for Fire Ecology is to provide students from diverse backgrounds with an open forum on fire ecology through which research can be shared, networks formed and funding and information resources accessed.

Section 2. Objectives: The Student Association for Fire Ecology develops objectives and goals each year to ensure the progression of the association and to expand the standings of chapters for the benefit of members. Long term objectives are to develop the association as the premier organization for students to share knowledge and meet others engaged in fire ecology research and practice; to expand its membership nationwide; and to continue to promote new and innovative research and opportunities to prepare its members to be the next generation of leaders in fire ecology and related disciplines.

### **Article III –Local Chapters**

Section 1. Rationale: The history of SAFE is one of local chapters organized at the individual University level, and the National leadership of SAFE seeks to facilitate communication among these chapters; cohesion into a unified body; and interaction with AFE.

Section 2. Numbers: The number of local chapters will vary as members organize them or as local chapters change status. SAFE members may organize a local chapter based at their university with a minimum number of three members.

Section 3a: Local Chapter Duties: To be recognized as a local chapter of SAFE, each local chapter is required to hold regular meetings; to maintain a list of members; to participate in a minimum of three national-level SAFE meetings or telephone conference calls per year; and to submit accurate contact information for its officers and chapter advisor (if applicable) to the SAFE Secretary or another National SAFE officer once per year, preferably following each election cycle. Local SAFE chapters are encouraged to designate one member as a Representative to regularly attend SAFE conference calls or meetings, to ensure consistent communication and liaison with the national SAFE and other local chapters.

Section 3b. Local Chapter Membership: While it is the position of SAFE that local chapters should encourage participation among as many students as possible, and should engage in outreach activities, local SAFE chapters shall require membership in AFE/SAFE as a prerequisite for membership in their own local SAFE chapter.

Section 3c. At-Large Chapter: In recognition that many SAFE members may not be able to align themselves with a local chapter for reasons of geography or due to a lack of membership at their local university, an At-Large Chapter is hereby formed for those SAFE members who formerly lack a local chapter. This At-Large Chapter shall be afforded all the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of any other local chapter, and is encouraged to meet via telephone conference call, Webinar, or other appropriate medium to be chosen by its members.

Section 4: Funding for Local Chapters: In recognition of the importance of student involvement in AFE via SAFE, the Board of Directors of AFE shall return dues paid by SAFE members to their local chapter. These funds may be used at the local chapter's discretion, pursuant to individual school regulations and local chapter bylaws, for membership drives, fundraising, conference activities, equipment purchase, travel, or speaker fees. These funds shall be provided yearly to each local SAFE chapters by the AFE Treasurer in November, based on the chapter's

number of current affiliated SAFE members, provided the following information is submitted by the local chapter to the national SAFE Treasurer by 31 October:

- (a) The names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and positions of each of its officers and faculty advisor, if applicable;
- (b) The number of members in the local chapter; and
- (c) The local chapter must have a school-approved account into which funds may be deposited, or provide a statement from a faculty advisor indicating a willingness to oversee use of the returned-dues funds.

## **Article IV. Local Chapter Funding**

Section 1. In-Chapter Funding: Local chapters are encouraged to seek funding from their sponsoring school or outside sources assist the chapter financially. Fundraisers are encouraged to assist the chapter with their funding.

Section 2. Travel Grant Funding: Funding may be provided for SAFE members to attend AFE sponsored conferences through funds provided by AFE or the national SAFE budget (see Article V, Section 1). SAFE Officers shall designate a committee for receiving and reviewing funding requests, and making recommendations to the SAFE Treasurer. SAFE Officers shall determine the extent of funding for travel based on need, number of applicants, anticipated future events, and the resources provided to SAFE by AFE or attained through other means.

Section 3. Local Chapter Activity Funding: From time to time, as local chapters are formed or experience special needs for funding (e.g., hosting a national SAFE meeting, conference or event), they may make requests for seed funding to SAFE. These requests shall be reviewed by the officers of SAFE. Depending on the availability of funding, SAFE officers may choose to provide some or all of the funding requested, or to request additional funding from AFE on behalf of the local chapter.

Section 4. Local chapter dues: It is the position of SAFE that because local chapters will vary widely in their members' interests and objectives, the decision whether local chapters may charge additional membership dues above and beyond AFE/SAFE dues is the decision of the local chapter. However, local chapters who decide to charge additional dues must serve the interests of dues-paying SAFE members who choose not to pay local-chapter dues, by allowing attendance at meetings and communication via e-mail, social media, etc.

## **Article V. National Chapter Funding**

Section 1: Because it is in the interest of AFE to promote SAFE activities, the AFE Board of Directors has committed to providing funding for National SAFE activities to include prizes for SAFE Awards; seed money to support new local SAFE Chapters or special events of existing chapters; travel awards for SAFE members to attend SAFE-sponsored or AFE-sponsored meetings or conferences; travel of National SAFE Officers to AFE Board meetings or SAFE meetings; materials for publicizing SAFE activities and attracting members; or other purposes deemed necessary or reasonable by the SAFE Officers. It shall be the duty of the National SAFE Treasurer, working with the other Officers, to present a budget request to the AFE Board on an

annual basis; the SAFE Officers shall work with the AFE Board to negotiate budget requests based on SAFE need and AFE resources. National SAFE may request funds for its own special or unforeseen needs or on behalf of local SAFE chapters for distribution thereto.

## **Article VI. National SAFE Officers; Terms; Elections**

Section 1. The National officers of SAFE shall consist of the following four positions with duties described below:

(a) President: The SAFE President shall be responsible for the overall conduct of business within SAFE, and therefore is granted executive power and responsibility to call meetings; to organize conference calls; to ensure SAFE representation at AFE events and conferences; to appoint and dissolve committees for special tasks (i.e., conferences, awards, outreach, etc.); oversee elections and the orderly transition of officers and SAFE records from one set of officers to the next; and other duties as may become necessary.

(b) Vice President: The SAFE Vice President shall assist the President in performing the roles and duties of that office; shall stand in and act for the President in her/his absence from meetings or events; and shall assist the President in maintaining a list of standing SAFE committees. Also, the Vice President shall function as interim Chair of the At-large chapter of SAFE, ensuring that the members of this chapter maintain communication with one another, other chapters, and National SAFE and AFE.

(c) Secretary: The SAFE Secretary shall maintain minutes of meetings and conference calls; maintain an updated list of SAFE members, local chapters and advisors, their participation in SAFE conference calls, and their contact information for the purpose of communication; assist the President in sending messages via e-mail or social networking sites to SAFE members; and maintain SAFE's presence on social media sites, such as Facebook or others to be determined by SAFE officers and members' preferences. In addition, the Secretary shall work with the Treasurer to ensure local chapters submit updated contact and financial information annually to facilitate the return of AFE dues for local chapters' use.

(d) Treasurer: The SAFE Treasurer is responsible for maintaining SAFE's financial assets, in coordination with the AFE Treasurer. The Treasurer's primary duties shall include: maintaining records of balances and expenditures, and providing reports thereof to the SAFE President or AFE Board from time to time; preparing annual funding requests, with input from SAFE officers, to submit to the AFE Board; receiving and compiling local chapter financial and membership information for submission to the AFE Treasurer to facilitate the return of AFE dues to local chapters; and assisting other SAFE officers with any special budgetary or financial needs that may arise due to SAFE or AFE events, conferences, etc.

Additional officer positions may be temporarily created by the agreement of the SAFE Officers to assist with special or unusual tasks.

Section 2. Terms: The terms of SAFE Officers shall be one calendar year, with terms beginning immediately following the completion of uncontested elections. Should the results of an election be called into question by a SAFE member or AFE Board member, the current officeholder shall continue to function in that office until the results can be verified or another election held, at the sole discretion of the SAFE President. If the current holder of the contested office is unwilling or unable to continue in office, the Vice President shall assume the duties of that office until a replacement is elected.

Section 3. Elections: National SAFE elections shall be held annually during SAFE meetings at which a quorum is present (usually convened at AFE conferences or via conference call in years without national AFE Conferences). Elections shall take place by secret ballot or (in the case of phone meetings) voice votes, with roll-call counts to take place if any SAFE member requests a count.

Section 4. Removal of National Officers: If officers are not performing assigned duties, removal proceedings may be initiated at the request of any National SAFE officer or local chapter President (or equivalent officer). Following such a request, SAFE shall notify the officer(s) in question within 7 days of the request; also, SAFE shall convene a special meeting open to all SAFE members within 30 days of the request to review the officer(s) standing. At this meeting, the officer in question shall speak on her or his own behalf, and shall be subjected to a vote of confidence. If two-thirds of the special meeting attendees vote against the officer remaining in her or his post, the officer shall be removed from the post immediately. The SAFE President, or next-highest-ranking SAFE officer present, shall then organize a special election for the remainder of the officer's term.

## **Article VI. Meetings**

Section 1a. Regular Meetings: Conference Call Meetings shall be held a minimum of five times per calendar year: twice during the spring academic term, twice during the fall academic term, and once during the traditional summer months. The time and date of the call will be established and announced to the entire SAFE membership at least two weeks prior to the call. An additional reminder notice within one week prior to the call is encouraged, along with a tentative agenda or list of topics to be discussed.

Section 1b. Quorum: At each Regular or Annual SAFE Meeting, a quorum (determined by the SAFE President) is must be reached before the meeting can proceed. A quorum may be reached by either of the following means:

- (a) one representative from each of at least half of the active local SAFE chapters; or
- (b) a number of SAFE members equal to half the number of active local SAFE chapters.

For the purposes of determining a quorum, the National SAFE Officers may be counted as representing their own home chapter; however, the Vice President may choose to represent either her/his own home chapter or the At-large Chapter, but not both.

Section 2. Annual Meetings: Annual meetings will be held at an AFE Conference or via phone if no AFE Conference takes place in a given year. At this meeting the election of officers will be conducted.

Section 3. Committee Meetings: Specially appointed committee meetings, including meetings of the National SAFE Officers, can be arranged when necessary to complete special tasks. Committee chairs report to the SAFE President or a designee and are encouraged to work with the SAFE President to schedule their meetings via the dedicated AFE conference call line. If a conference call or physical meeting can not be conducted the meeting is encouraged to be via the internet or via private means (cell, office phones).

## **Article VII. AFE Liaison to SAFE**

Section 1. National Chapter Liaison(s): Should the AFE Board appoint one of its number to act as a liaison to SAFE, the AFE/SAFE Liaison shall be notified of all upcoming SAFE calls and meetings, and shall be encouraged to participate in discussions via e-mail or social media. The AFE/SAFE Liaison shall not be permitted to vote in AFE elections.

## **Article VIII. – Chapter and Member Rights; Miscellaneous**

Section 1. National Membership Rules of Order: The organization shall not deny membership to any student on the basis of race, age, color, religion or lack thereof, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Section 2a. Members' Rights: As every member of SAFE is also a member of AFE, nothing in this Constitution shall be construed as limiting the rights of AFE membership which is governed by the AFE bylaws and membership rules. Every SAFE member additionally has the right to participate fully in all National SAFE activities, to include (but not limited to) fundraisers, conference activities, committees, meetings, etc. Every SAFE member has the right to make motions, vote on motions and in elections, and to receive the assistance of the SAFE Secretary or President in contacting other members of SAFE.

Section 2b. Members' Inspection Rights: Every SAFE member has the following inspection rights:

(a) inspection of a copy of all chapter and members' names and contact information upon written demand with a valid purpose for which the inspection rights are being requested.

(b) inspection of yearly budget, upon written demand with valid purpose which the inspection rights are being requested.

(c) inspection of historic meeting notes with written request to the secretary. (These notes should be sent to all National SAFE Chapter Representatives Post-meeting.)

(d) inspection of democratic voting procedures and practices as well as nomination and voting logs upon written demand with valid purpose which the inspection rights are being requested.

Any requests should be handled in an ethical manner and in a timely fashion. Upon relevance demonstrated to the National SAFE Officers, any matter may be held under quorum in a specially requested meeting

## **Article IX. Amendments**

Section 1. Amendments: This constitution or any attached articles may be amended at any regular conference call meeting of the organization by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the representatives of the current active local SAFE chapters, provided that the amendment has been approved for voting (see Section 2 below) and submitted to the SAFE membership in writing (preferably via e-mail) at least two weeks prior to the call or conference meeting.

Section 2. Consideration of a Proposed Amendment: For an amendment to be considered and subjected to vote by the process described in Section 1, it may be submitted by any SAFE member to the National SAFE President, who shall include it on the next meeting or conference call agenda for discussion by its submitting member. Following this discussion, a vote of at least half the meeting attendees shall result in the amendment being put forth as a proposed Constitutional amendment at the subsequent conference call. The rationale for this two-step voting process is to avoid the rapid proliferation of amendments to the SAFE Constitution without careful consideration and discussion by SAFE members.

## **Article X. SAFE Awards/Scholarships**

Section 1. Requirements and Obligations: The designation of a SAFE or AFE award or scholarship in the name of SAFE shall be restricted to active SAFE members and all requirements designated of that specific application shall be met prior to designation of the award. Awards given based on academic achievements must be backed by the proper documentation. Students receiving awards are expected to be present at any award recognition; however, if extenuating circumstances arise and are approved by the National SAFE Chapter representatives and AFE Advisors, the attendance is waived.