

Constitution of Aggie Guide-Dogs and Service-Dogs (AGS)

Article I. Name

The name of this student organization shall be known as the Aggie Guide-Dogs and Service-Dogs. The organization will also be known by its acronym, AGS.

Article II. Purpose and Goals

Section I. Purpose

The purpose of AGS will be to educate about, fundraise for, and promote the training and use of guide dogs and service dogs and to increase awareness about how these animals help the individuals with disabilities who use them throughout the campus, community and beyond.

Section II. Goals

The major goals of AGS shall be the following:

- 1) Increase campus and community awareness about guide dogs and service dogs and how these animals help the individuals with disabilities who use them.
- 2) Raise funds for the AGS puppies in training.
- 3) Recruit future members for AGS.
- 4) Develop student leadership on the Texas A&M University campus.
- 5) Raise puppies that are suitable for formal training by nationally recognized guide dog and service dog organizations.

Article III. Membership

Membership into AGS will be open to all Texas A&M University students, faculty and residents of the Bryan/College Station community. Members must pay dues and attain 12 AGS points per semester to maintain active membership. Allotment of points will be determined per event by the AGS officers. Dues are to be paid in the spring semester for all persons not maintaining an active membership in the fall semester as well as any new members. Spring dues will equal half of the amount paid per individual in the previous fall semester.

At the end of the Spring Semester, one member will be honored with the title of Humanitarian of the Year. In order to receive this title, this member must earn the most membership points throughout the year. The Humanitarian of the Year will have their name added to the Humanitarian of the Year plaque. In order to be eligible for this award, the person in question must be a paid, active member who is not an officer or a current puppy trainer. The Humanitarian of the Year will be announced at the annual End of the Year Banquet.

Article IV. Officers

Section I. Requirements

The officers of this organization must meet the following requirements:

a) Have a minimum grade point ratio (GPR) as stated below and meet that minimum GPR in the semester immediately prior to the election/appointment, the semester of election/appointment and semesters during the term of office.

1) For undergraduate students, the minimum GPR is 2.00. In order for this provision to be met, at least six hours (half-time credits) must have been taken for the semester under consideration. In one limited circumstance, summer semester hours may be applied to this provision. In order for summer coursework to qualify toward a grade point ratio prior to election/appointment, at least six credit hours must have been taken during the course of either the full or two summer session(s).

2) For graduate level students the minimum GPR is a 3.00. In order for this provision be met, at least four hours (half-time credits) must have been taken for the semester under consideration. In one limited circumstance, summer semester hours may be applied to this provision. In order for summer coursework to qualify toward a grade point ratio prior to election/appointment, at least four credit hours must have been taken during the course of either the full or two summer session(s) unless fewer credits are required as they complete the final stages of their degree.

b) Be in good standing with the University and enrolled:

1) at least half time (six or more credit hours), if an undergraduate student (unless fewer credits are required to graduate in the spring and fall semesters) during the term of office, and

2) at least half time (four or more credits), if a graduate level student (unless fewer credits are required in the final stages of their degree as defined by the Continuous Registration Requirement) during their term of office.

c) Be ineligible to hold an office should the student fail to maintain the requirement as prescribed in a) and b).

Subsection A. Special Provisions

Alumni member shall be past active members of AGS who continue to support the purposes of AGS and subscribe to its Constitution. Non-students (Alumni members) should only hold an officer position as a last resort if there are no student members with the experience needed to fulfill the duties required by a position. In accordance with University policy, a non-student in this position will

not be considered an officer and will not be required to help prepare for events, nor will they be allowed to vote on any matter. They will, however, be encouraged to attend all AGS events and officer meetings in order to be fully informed and offer their opinions and thoughts when decisions need to be made.

Subsection B. Special Provision

The Senior and Junior Trainer Supervisors must have gone through all necessary training to be considered a puppy trainer. It is preferred that former AGS puppy trainers fill this position to best adapt and meet the need of the current puppy trainers and the organization. It should be a last resort to have this position held by someone who has gone through the training but not raised a dog.

Subsection C. Special Provision

The position of President is open to all current AGS officers. Current puppy trainers that are officers should be considered as a last resort for president as there can be a conflict in power and it is best for the organization to run smoothly if this does not happen.

Subsection D. Special Provision

The position of Trainer Liaison must have gone through all necessary training to be considered a puppy trainer. It is preferred that former AGS puppy trainers fill this position to best adapt and meet the need of the current puppy trainers and the organization. It should be a last resort to have this position held by someone who has gone through the training but not raised a dog.

Section II. Officers and Duties

Presidential duties include but are not limited to:

- 1) preside at all meetings.
- 2) act as a liaison to the Texas A&M University campus, the Bryan/College Station community, guide dog and service dog organizations, and any other groups deemed necessary.
- 3) oversee all operations of the organization and committees and delegate responsibilities to members and officers.
- 4) have the authority to call meetings.
- 5) call for a vote among all of the officers when there is disagreement between two or more officers. If a tie occurs the president will carefully decide what is best for the organization and implement his/her decision.
- 6) have authority to overtake responsibilities of other AGS officers when necessary.

Director of Administration's duties include but are not limited to:

- 1) serve as treasurer and secretary of the organization.
- 2) keep accurate records of membership information.
- 3) pay bills.
- 4) oversee other monetary transactions, including fundraising activities.

5) not allow funds to be used without a signature from both an Advisor and the Administration or Presidential officer.

Director of Programs' duties include but are not limited to:

- 1) help in scheduling of guest speakers and programs to educate and increase campus and community awareness about guide dogs and service dogs and how these animals help the individuals with disabilities who use them.
- 2) conduct all general membership meetings.
- 3) serve as head of the programs committee.
- 4) receive approval of programs from the President and at least one other officer before allowing them to be presented in order to prevent unclear, harmful or incorrect statements under AGS name.

Director of Publicity's duties include but are not limited to:

- 1) be responsible for publicizing AGS meetings, events and programs.
- 2) serve as head of the publicity committee.
- 3) receive approval for publicity flyers, interviews, etc from the President and at least one other officer before allowing them to be presented in order to prevent unclear, harmful or incorrect statements under AGS name.
- 4) print out a PawPrint for each general meeting outlining the meeting topics
- 5) organize all mass mailing
- 6) record attendance for each AGS event

Trainer Supervisors' duties include but are not limited to:

- 1) supervise selection of puppies from humane organizations.
- 2) supervise puppy trainer selection process.
- 3) supervise training and socialization of puppies.
- 4) make recommendations to officers for removal of puppy from assigned Puppy Trainer if problems arise and remain problematic.
- 5) make final evaluation of puppy between 12 and 18 months of age to determine placement options.
- 6) work in conjunction with other Trainer Supervisor on all issues and tasks related to this position.
- 7) receive approval from the President, the Advisor and at least one other officer to add a dog to the program in order to prevent overtaxing AGS resources; to prevent dogs from entering the program, except under the proscribed methods; and to insure the officer's knowledge of each new dog.
- 8) supervise placement of retired (VIP) dogs into loving homes.

Trainer Liaison's duties include but are not limited to:

- 1) find veterinary sponsors for AGS dogs and maintain communication on AGS' behalf with local veterinarians.
- 2) research and compile a list of breeders that are suitable donors for an AGS puppy.
- 3) help the Trainer Supervisors with shelter tests.
- 4) respond to emails from the public requesting a service dog from our

organization.

5) responsible for picking up and delivering the donated dog food and the flea & heart worm medication.

6) aid the Trainer Supervisors with various tasks and duties.

Director of Communications' duties include but are not limited to:

- 1) maintain and update the AGS website.
- 2) act as Historian by keeping a scrapbook of all AGS events as well as historical records of all AGS puppies.
- 3) check AGS email; respond or forward to the appropriate officer.
- 4) organize the members emails and send out announcements over the AGS list serve.

Director of Fundraising's duties include but are not limited to:

- 1) organize and coordinate AGS fundraising events.
- 2) ensure all funds are handed over to the Director of Administration for deposit.
- 3) receive approval for events, locations, etc from all officers before allowing them to be presented in order to prevent unclear, harmful or incorrect statements under AGS name.
- 4) preside over fundraising events.

Director of Events' duties include but are not limited to:

- 1) Assist the Directors of Fundraising and Programs in the planning and implementation of fundraising and educational events.
- 2) Plan, prepare for, and organize all other AGS events including celebrations, banquets, etc. This often involves making reservations, spreading awareness about the event and making itineraries.
- 3) Schedule, plan for and organize to have an AGS booth set up at public events.

All officers shall work as a team to promote unity throughout the organization and support the other officers in carrying out their duties.

Section III. Election Process

Elections shall be held for all officer positions at the end of each spring semester. Special circumstances may require an election to take place at a different time during the fall and spring semesters. All officers, with the exception of the president, trainer supervisors, and trainer liaison shall be elected from the general active membership. If an election takes place at a time other than the end of a semester, only active members from the previous semester may run. If there are not enough active members running for the open positions, the current officers will vote to decide if non-active members may run. In this case, those non-active members must be paid members. A previous officer who left for no more than one semester during which they could not maintain active membership is also eligible to run for officer, including President, if they have maintained good standing with AGS. This will be decided by a current officer vote in which a majority vote will win. Only members who have paid dues may vote on the positions unless the time of year prevents membership such as during the summer or before dues are paid at the beginning of each

semester. In this case, current officers will vote. A simple majority vote of those present will win. The newly elected President and Puppy Trainer Supervisors shall count the ballots. Newly elected officers shall assume responsibilities after the last AGS event of the spring semester unless elected at other times during the year in which case they will assume those responsibilities immediately.

Subsection A. Election of the President

Any current officer (unless meeting the guidelines stated above) who has served as an officer for at least one full, regular semester (i.e. fall and/or spring) may be eligible to run for presidency. The office of the president shall be voted on by the current officers, and the candidate who receives the majority of votes shall assume the position. This election shall take place after the Puppy Trainer Supervisor and Puppy Trainer Liaison elections, and prior to all other elections. The Advisor shall be contacted and shall vote in the event of a tie.

Subsection B. Election of Trainer Supervisors

1. A Senior and Junior Puppy Trainer Supervisor will be elected each year. This election will take place before presidential elections and prior to all other elections. All current officers, other than those running for this position shall vote. A simple majority vote will win.
2. Both Trainer Supervisors are required to carry out the full range of duties expected of them. They will work together and equally on all aspects of this program. Each Trainer Supervisor has an equal weight within the officer group.

Subsection C. Election of Trainer Liaison

1. A Trainer Liaison will be elected each year. This election will take place before Trainer Supervisor elections and prior to all other elections. All current officers, other than those running for this position shall vote. A simple majority vote will win.
2. Trainer Liaison is required to carry out the full range of duties expected of them. They will work together with the Trainer Supervisors as a team on all aspects of this program.

Section IV. Removal of an Officer, Alumni Member, or Member

Subsection A. Removal of an Officer

In the event that any officer fails to perform his/her duties in a manner which benefits the organization, that officer shall be subject to review by the other officers and the advisor. Should an officer's position be reviewed for possible removal, he/she will be notified by email stating the reason for their removal and will be given an opportunity to account for their situation to the remaining officers and advisor. These officers will review the situation after hearing from

the officer in question. A decision will be made expeditiously and the officer will be contacted as to the outcome of the situation. If 2/3 of the remaining officers vote that the officer should be removed, he/she will be asked to resign, and a new officer will be elected or appointed as outlined in Article IV, Section III. Any officer that does not maintain active membership or attend at least 2/3 of the officer meetings will come up for immediate review. Once an officer is removed from their position, they forfeit the right to hold any future officer positions.

Subsection B. Removal of an Alumni Member

In the event that any alumni member fails to perform his/her duties in a manner which benefits the organization, that alumni member shall be subject to review by the other officers and the advisor. Should an alumni member be reviewed for possible removal, he/she will be notified by email stating the reason for their removal, and will be given an opportunity to account for their situation to the officers and advisor. These officers will review the situation after hearing from the alumni member in question. A decision will be made expeditiously and the officer will be contacted as to the outcome of the situation. If 2/3 of the remaining officers vote that the alumni member should be removed, he/she will be asked to resign, and a member or alumni member will be elected or appointed as outlined in Article IV, Section III. Any alumni member that does not maintain active membership or attend at least 2/3 of the officer meetings will come up for immediate review. Once an officer is removed from their position, they forfeit the right to hold any future officer positions.

Subsection C.

Any member who is found misrepresenting AGS shall be notified through email of their reason for being reviewed and offered the chance to speak at an officer meeting. The officers will review the member's situation, and a majority of the officers must vote to dismiss a member from the organization. The member, in turn, will be notified of the officer's decision. Officers are excluded from the payment of dues.

Article V. Advisors

Section I. Expectations

Advisors for Aggie Guide-Dogs and Service-Dogs have the following requirements and responsibilities:

1. They must be a Texas A&M University employee as defined by the Human Resources Department and must be a faculty member, professional or associate staff member, or graduate assistant. They must be familiar with the activities of the organization and have (or be willing to obtain) an appropriate level of experience, resources, and knowledge related to those activities and the mission of the organization.

2. They must meet with the officers or the president of AGS in order to stay connected with the organizations activities.

3. They should be aware of the University Student Rules and other institutional guidelines that establish expectations for student behavior and activities and ensure that the group and its officers are adhering to the rules. They must also be familiar with the organization's constitution and all other governing documents, so that you may advise effectively.

Section II. Replacement

If for any reason the advisor is no longer willing and/or able to fulfill the responsibilities, they will formally communicate this to the student organization and the Department of Student Activities in writing. The organization will then determine the appropriate course of action for replacing the advisor.

If the AGS officers feel that the advisor is no longer fulfilling their responsibilities adequately, they will vote to remove the advisor. This vote will take place after discussing the issues with the advisor and done only if the problem is not resolved. The vote to remove an advisor must be unanimous. A new advisor must be selected within 6 weeks and all necessary paperwork including a new signature card and online updates will be completed at this time. The new advisor will be responsible for attending an advisor development seminar.

Article VI. Meetings

Regular meetings shall be held approximately twice per month with committee meetings held during the weeks between the general meetings.

Article VII. Finances

Section I. Dues

Dues shall be determined per academic year and will be collected from all members of this organization excluding officers.

Section II. Monies

All monies belonging to this organization shall be deposited and disbursed through a bank account established for this organization at the Student Organization Finance Center and/or the Fiscal Office. All funds must be deposited within 24 hours after collection. The advisor to this organization must approve and sign each expenditure before payment.

Article VIII. Puppy Training Program

Section I. Goals

The goals of the AGS Puppy Training Program are to obedience train and socialize puppies from a young age until the puppies are about 12 - 18 months old. At the end of this period, the well-trained, healthy, and good-tempered puppies will be donated to a nationally recognized service dog organization for formal training and eventual placement with a disabled partner.

Section II. Supervision

The Puppy Training Program shall be presided over by the Trainer Supervisors. The Supervisors must receive approval from the President, the Advisor and at least one other officer to add a dog to the program in order to prevent overtaxing AGS resources; to prevent dogs from entering the program, except under the proscribed methods; and to insure the officer's knowledge of each new dog.

Section III. Puppy Selection

Puppies may be obtained from humane organizations, breed rescue organizations, or private donors. All puppies accepted into the Puppy Training Program shall be free of major health problems and pass the required AGS temperament test. Puppies should ideally be a minimum of 8 weeks old to a maximum of 16 weeks old.

Section IV. Puppy Trainer Selection

Puppy Trainers will be chosen from the AGS general membership. Selection shall be based on an application, interview, and residential evaluation process. Puppy Trainers shall be chosen by the Puppy Trainer Supervisors and shall gain and retain active membership while training the AGS puppy. Puppy Trainers are required to attend all AGS events, unless their absence is excused by the Trainer Supervisors. Before a potential puppy trainer receives a dog, a meeting must be held with the potential Puppy Trainer, Trainer Supervisors, the President, and the Advisor.

Section V. Evaluation

Puppies and Puppy Trainers shall be subject to monthly evaluations by the Trainer Supervisors. If, at any point, the Supervisors determines that the puppy's progress is unsatisfactory or that the Puppy Trainer is not fulfilling his/her duties as determined by the Puppy Trainer contract, the Supervisors (with the approval of the President, the Advisor and at least one other officer) may take steps to resolve the problem, up to and including placing the puppy with a new Puppy Trainer or withdrawing the puppy from the Puppy Trainer Program.

Section VI. Puppy Trainer Contract

The Puppy Trainer and the Trainer Supervisors shall both sign an agreement laying out the expectations for the puppy and the responsibilities of the Puppy Trainer. This

contract must be signed before the puppy is placed with the Puppy Trainer. The Jr. Trainer Supervisor will hold all original contracts. In the case that the Jr. Trainer Supervisor is also a puppy trainer, the Sr. Trainer Supervisor will hold their paperwork.

Section VII. Final Evaluation

When the puppy is about one year to 18 months old, the Trainer Supervisors shall evaluate it for placement options. If deemed suitable, the puppy will be donated to a nationally recognized service dog organization for formal training. If deemed unsuitable or if not permanently accepted by a nationally recognized service dog organization, the Puppy Trainer Supervisors and other officers will determine if there is another organization such as police dog network, search and rescue network etc. that the puppy would be suitable for. If not, the puppy will be retired from the program and adopted to either an approved community member that could use a well trained dog for therapy or companion work, its Puppy Trainer, or an approved community member as a pet. The new owner will be encouraged to continue the dog's training and enroll it in a therapy dog program.

Article IX. Amendments and Revisions

Section I. Amendments

This constitution may be amended by:

1) A majority vote of approval held at a general meeting that includes all members who have paid dues and are present at the meeting unless the time of year prevents there from being membership such as in the summer or before dues are paid at the beginning of each semester. In this case, the majority of the current officers can vote to make amendments.

Section II. Reviews

This document is subject to review by the Department of Student Activities annually and/or when it is amended.

Signature of Advisor

Date

Signature of President

Date

Approved: _____
Department of Student Activities

Date