

THE CONSTITUTION OF NIGERIAN COMMUNITY IN GREATER CLEVELAND

PREAMBLE:

We, the people of Nigeria and Nigerian descent residing in the Greater Cleveland Area, bound by common Faith, Trust, and Unity have come together to promote the welfare of all of our members based on the Principles of Equality and Justice for all. We do hereby resolve to constitute ourselves into the Nigerian Community in Greater Cleveland, State of Ohio.

ARTICLE I: THE ORGANIZATION

Section 1:

(a) The Organization shall be known as “Nigerian Community in Greater Cleveland” (NCGC).

(b) It shall be headed by officials elected by majority of members at any of its general meetings as indicated in Article IV stated herein this document.

(c) Greater Cleveland shall comprise of cities in Northeastern part of Ohio.

Section 2: NCGC is a 501-3 (c) non-tax exempt. NCF shall continue to exist as the 501-3 (c) Tax-exempt and shall be administered by a board to maintain and continue to administer whatever function(s) NFC is currently performing as stated in its Bylaws on behalf of NCGC. It shall be supervised audited by the NCGC

Executive Committee or its designee.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

THE ORGANIZATION SHALL EXIST TO:

- (a) Support and assist its members and non-members whenever feasible.
- (b) Foster unity among its members and provide a forum for exchange of ideas and information
- (c) Promote Nigerian culture in the Greater Cleveland community and beyond.
- (d) Recognize the rights and responsibilities of Nigerians in the Cleveland community, the State of Ohio, and the United States of America.
- (e) Promote scholarship and the pursuit of educational excellence.
- (f) Maintain a physical location within the Greater Cleveland community where official activities of the organization are conducted.
- (g) Have the authority to acquire, invest and dispense property for the sole purpose of NCGC

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: **Eligibility:** Membership shall be open to all Nigerians by virtue of birth,

marriage to Nigerians, naturalization, and Nigerian parentage residing in the Greater Cleveland community as defined in Article 1, Sec.2.

Section 2: Membership:

- (a) Individual membership: This applies to single male or female.
- (b) Family membership: This applies to married persons with/without children, or single parents.
- (c) Student membership: This applies to anyone with valid college identification who chooses not to comply with (a) or (b) above.
- (d) Honorary membership: This may be accorded any person not eligible to be a member under Article 3, Sec.1.
- (e) At-Large Membership: Those who have moved or in transit but wish to maintain their membership.

Section 3: Membership Dues

- (a) Dues shall be payable during the first quarter (1st Qtr) of each calendar year to the Financial Secretary.
- (b) New members joining in the last quarter (4th Qtr) of the year shall have their dues pro-rated.
- (c) The membership year shall be from January 1 to December 31 of each year.
- (d) The dues for student membership shall be a quarter (1/4) of that of an

individual membership.

Section 4: **Good Standing**

(a) A member is considered to be in good standing if:

- (i) Annual membership dues and any other required financial obligations are current.
- (ii) Attendance standards, as set forth in Article III, Section 7, have been met.

(b) Notification of members out of good standing status:

- (i) A member may be notified in writing of loss of good standing status by the Financial Secretary. However, it is the responsibility of members to check with the Financial Secretary about their financial standing.
- (ii) Failure to bring the membership up-to-date within six months will result in loss of good standing.
- (iii) Loss of good standing causes the member to forgo all membership benefits/privileges (see ARTICLE II of the By-laws for list of benefits).

Section 5: Termination of Membership

- (a) **Non-Payment of Dues:** Membership may be terminated for non-payment of dues if no dues have been paid for a period of two (2) years.
- (b) **Infractions:** Members may be admonished, suspended from certain privileges, or expelled from the organization for any of the following reasons:
 - (i) Willful misuse of any NCGC owned properties or facilities; or any properties or facilities associated with NCGC during any of its events.
 - (ii) Willful disregard of the safety of themselves and/or of others while participating in NCGC activities.
 - (iii) Conduct detrimental to NCGC, as determined by an appropriate committee.
- (c) **Voluntary-** Any member may wish to voluntarily relinquish his/her membership
- (d) **Non-refundable Dues-** No member who either voluntarily or loses his/her membership is entitled or should have any fees, dues or donation refunded to him or her or their beneficiaries.

Section 6: Restoration of Membership.

- (a) Any member who satisfies section (5), sub-sections (a) through (c)

above

- (b) Any member(s) who restores his/her membership after being delinquent for a while will start will begin or start as new members with regard to their benefits as stated in the Bylaws

Section 7: Attendance Requirements

- (a) Members are required to attend a minimum of three (3) meetings during each calendar year.
- (b) Members who fail to meet the minimum attendance requirement are considered not to be in good standing, and will forfeit voting and other privileges as stipulated in the By-Laws. (The only exception is for those members who live over 30 miles from the meeting venue).

ARTICLE IV: TYPES OF MEETINGS

GENERAL MEETINGS

Section 1: There shall be a monthly general meeting of members.

Section 2: The General Meeting shall have authority to:

- (a) Approve, amend, introduce and ratify issues brought before it.
- (b) Amend the constitution by a two-third (2/3) majority vote of members present.
- (c) Approve annual budgets.
- (d) Elect officers of the organization.

(e) Expel members.

Section 3: Teleconference: There shall two teleconferences and one face to face conference each quarter. The first meeting shall be face to face and the subsequent shall be by teleconference or as it shall be determined by the Executive committee or the President.

Section 4: Quorum

(a) No official business of the organization shall be conducted at any time without a quorum.

(b) The quorum for general meetings shall be as stipulated in the By-Law.

Section 5: Notice of Meetings: The notice of general meetings shall be sent by the General Secretary, and this shall include agenda, date, time, and place of meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Section 1: EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

(a) The notice of Executive Meetings shall be sent in advance by the President or his/her designee.

(b) The quorum for the Executive Committee meeting shall be by simple majority of its members.

Section 2: **STANDING AND AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- (a) Standing and Ad-Hoc committees shall be used to involve members in the planning and implementation of the organization's matters.
- (b) The notice of Committee Meetings shall be sent by the committee chairperson.

- (c) The quorum for Committee meetings shall be determined by its members.

Section 3: **SPECIAL /EMERGENCY MEETINGS**

- (a) Any non-scheduled meeting as defined by the constitution shall constitute a special or emergency meeting.
- (b) The President or in his/her absence, the Vice President shall immediately convene a Special/Emergency meeting at the request of one-third of n members in good standing.
- (c) In the absence of the President and the Vice President, a Special/Emergency meeting shall be called by the President's designee when necessary.
- (d) Notice of Special/Emergency meeting shall be published within 48 hours before it is held.
- (e) Notice of the Special/Emergency meeting shall include purpose and venue of the meeting.
- (f) Only published Agenda item(s) shall be discussed during the meeting.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

Section 1: Except for the Executive Committee, committee members shall be by appointment as follows: Forty percent by the President and sixty percent by the general body.

Section 2: Standing Committees shall serve through the term of the Administration.

Section 3: Standing Committees shall consist of:

- (a) Executive Committee
- (b) Social and Cultural Committee
- (c) Editorial and Publicity Committee
- (d) Membership Affairs Committee
- (e) Women's Committee
- (f) Finance Committee
- (g) Education Committee
- (h) Youth Committee

Section 4: Ad-hoc Committees may be established as needed.

ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEE REPORTS

Section 1: Upon the completion of a Committee's deliberation, a written report shall be submitted to the Executive Committee.

Section 2: The Executive Committee may request a meeting with the Committee's Chairperson or the Committee to review the report.

Section 3: The Executive Committee shall place the report on the agenda of the general meeting.

Section 4: All written final reports submitted to the Executive Committee shall not be altered in any form.

Section 5: Oral report of a Committee, when necessary, shall be made at the General Meeting by the Chairperson of that Committee or by his/her

designee.

ARTICLE VII: THE EXECUTIVE

Section 1: The Executive Committee shall comprise the following officers:

- (a) The President
- (b) The Vice President
- (c) The General Secretary
- (d) The Assistant General Secretary
- (e) The Treasurer
- (f) The Financial Secretary
- (g) The Publicity Secretary
- (h) The Social/Cultural Secretary
- (i) The Provost
- (j) The Chairperson of the Women's Committee
- (k) The Immediate Past President (non-voting member)

Section 2: The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a month on dates and times determined by the President in consultation with the Executive Committee.

Section 3: The Executive Committee shall have the authority to:

- (a) Manage the affairs of the organization.
- (b) Hire and supervise paid staff as authorized by the general body.

(c) Formulate agenda for the monthly general meetings.

(d) Prepare annual calendar of events.

Section 4: The Executive Committee shall prepare and submit an annual budget to the general body no later than March general meeting of that year.

Section 5: Each executive member shall account for and surrender all the organization's properties in his/her possession within fifteen days of leaving office.

Section. 6: There should be no compensation while serving or after serving as officer or on behalf of NCGC

Section 7: All binding commitments on behalf of NCGC shall be placed on the agenda of the general meeting for approval by a simple majority vote.

ARTICLE VIII: SOCIAL/CULTURAL COMMITTEE

Section 1: Shall consist of not less than five (5) members.

Section 2: Shall be responsible for planning and implementing all social and cultural activities of the organization in conjunction with the Women's Committee.

ARTICLE IX: YOUTH COMMITTEE

Section 1: Shall consist of not less than five (5) members, including three (3) youths.

Section 2: Shall be responsible for planning and implementing all social, cultural and educational activities for and on behalf of all the youths.

Section 3: The Youth group shall consist of members from High school age

groups to College level or any member who is thirty (30) years of age and below.

ARTICLE X: EDITORIAL AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Section 1: Shall consist of not less than five (5) members.

Section 2: Shall work with the Publicity Secretary in publicizing and advertising/distributing NCGC news, annual Independence Anniversary Celebration booklets, information and activities.

Section 3: Shall review and approve all articles and materials for publication.

ARTICLE XI: MEMBERSHIP AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Section 1: Shall consist of not less than five (5) members.

Section 2: Shall be responsible for recruiting and promoting membership, services, and privileges.

Section 3: Membership disciplinary issues shall be referred to the Membership Affairs Committee for deliberation.

Section 4: The Executive Committee shall refer to Membership Affairs Committee all issues it deems appropriate.

Section 5: Shall conduct hearings and settle disputes brought before it by members.

Section 6: If any member of the Membership Affairs Committee is involved in a dispute, such a member shall abstain from the deliberation of the dispute. The President shall appoint a temporary replacement until

the dispute is resolved.

Section 7: The decision of the Membership Affairs Committee shall be final unless a written dissent and a request to the general meeting to review it is filed with the President by any of the parties involved in the dispute within fourteen (14) days of the decision.

Section 8: All reports of the Membership Affairs Committee shall be submitted to the general meeting without withholding the names of the parties involved.

Section 9: The Committee shall recommend a disciplinary action to the general body.

ARTICLE XII: WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Section 1: The committee shall consist of all Nigerian women who are currently NCGC members in good financial standing.

Section 2: The Committee shall elect a governing body of five persons, including Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Social/Cultural Secretary for a two-year term.

Section 3: The qualifications for the Governing Body are as follows:

- (a) Must be a member in good financial standing.
- (b) Must have attended at least three (3) general meetings within the year.

Section 4: The general body of NCGC shall approve the governing body of the Committee.

Section 5: The Committee shall hold its monthly meeting on a day that is not in

conflict with NCGC general meeting.

Section 6: The Committee shall submit a monthly report to the general body of NCGC.

Section 7: The Committee shall:

- (a) Assist in procurement of foods for all NCGC events.
- (b) Assist the Social/Cultural Committee in planning and executing all NCGC events.
- (c) Plan and execute all activities which are of interest to women, but not in conflict with NCGC activities.

Section 8: **Expense Account**

- (a) The Committee shall maintain an expense account of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) from NCGC fund.
- (b) The committee shall solicit contributions from its members to execute specific activities that are of interest to it.
- (c) All funds in excess of the expense account of the five-hundred (\$500.00) shall be returned to NCGC.
- (d) Nothing in Sub-sections (a), (b), and (c) above precludes the Committee from presenting additional budgetary requests to NCGC.

ARTICLE XIII: THE ELECTORAL COMMITTEE

Section 1: Shall consist of not less than five (5) members.

Section 2: Shall screen all candidates for office and prepare list and ballot

materials for election of officers.

Section 3: Shall obtain a summary from individual nominees indicating their interests, commitments, and their vision for the organization.

Section 4: Shall encourage membership participation by publicizing the nominees' biodata and relevant election information.

Section 5: Shall manage and supervise all general and special elections.

Section 6: Shall announce the election results

Section 7: Shall file a written report of election results with the General Secretary, which shall be incorporated into the minutes of the general meeting.

ARTICLE XIV: THE PRESIDENT

Section 1: The President shall:

- (a) Preside over all organization's meetings except during election of officers or any other situations in which the office of the President is the subject of discussion.
- (b) Have no voting power in the general meeting except to break a tie.
- (c) Be the chief spokesperson and Chief Executive Officer of the organization.
- (d) Exercise discretion to delegate authorities and responsibilities to officers and other members as he/she deems fit.
- (e) Be a signatory to the organizations' bank accounts, and all other documents.

Section 2: The President shall present the state of the organization report at the February general meeting of each year.

Section 3: The President shall remain in office until a successor is duly elected and sworn into office, unless when removed from office before the expiration of his/her term.

ARTICLE XV: THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Section 1: The Vice-President shall assume the duties of the President in his/her absence.

Section 2: The Vice-President shall be an ex-officio member of all Committees except the audit body.

Section 3: Shall be one of the signatories to all organization's bank accounts, but shall only sign in the absence of the President.

ARTICLE XVI: THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Section 1: Shall be the custodian of all official records of the organization.

Section 2: Shall prepare and send notices of meetings to the members.

Section 3: Shall prepare and send the minutes of previous general meetings to all members before the next meeting.

Section 4: Shall be responsible for all official correspondences of the organization as directed by the President and/or the Executive committee.

ARTICLE XVII: ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY

Section 1: Shall assist the General Secretary in executing his/her duties and

responsibilities.

Section 2: Shall perform other duties as assigned by the General Secretary/Executive Committee.

ARTICLE XVIII: THE TREASURER

Section 1: Shall maintain custody of all organization's bank and investment records.

Section 2: Shall deposit all monies received on behalf of the organization in its bank account within three business days of collection.

Section 3: Shall be one of the signatories to all organization's bank accounts.

Section 4: Shall be primarily responsible for filing the organization's tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service, in conjunction with the Financial Secretary.

Section 5: Shall give monthly financial report of the organization reflecting the beginning balance, incomes, expenditures, and ending balance at every monthly general meeting.

Section 6: Shall keep records of all assets of the organization, and shall submit a bi-annual report of the organization's assets.

Section 7: Shall keep the original copies of all deposits and withdrawals.

Section 8: Shall receive an official invoice from the Financial Secretary prior to disbursement of funds.

Section 9: Shall issue receipts to the Financial Secretary for all monies received.

Section 10: Shall reconcile all financial records with the Financial Secretary as

necessary.

ARTICLE XIX: THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Section 1: Shall collect all monies and shall deliver same to the Treasurer within one (1) week. He or she shall collect receipts for all monies delivered to the Treasurer.

Section 2: Shall keep all records of all organization's accounts.

Section 3: Shall prepare and submit quarterly financial reports to the general body.

Section 4: Shall assist the Treasurer to file the organization's tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service.

Section 5: Shall be the association's chief debt collector and is responsible for informing members of their financial responsibilities.

Section 6: Shall issue receipts for all monies collected from members.

Section 7: Shall be one of the signatories to all organization's bank accounts.

Section 8: Shall reconcile all financial records with the Treasurer as necessary.

ARTICLE XX: THE PUBLICITY SECRETARY

Section 1: Shall be the image maker, and shall speak for and/or about the organization after consultation with the President.

Section 2: Shall publicize, advertise, and distribute NCGC news, information, and activities.

Section 3: Shall be responsible for attending community events, manning NCGC booths, and recruiting volunteers, if needed.

Section 4: Shall conduct outreach activities on behalf of the organization, in conjunction with the Social/Cultural Secretary and in consultation with the President.

Section 5: Shall be the chairperson of the Editorial and Publicity Committee.

ARTICLE XXI: THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SECRETARY

Section 1: Shall be responsible for coordinating all social and cultural activities of the organization in conjunction with the appropriate committees involved.

Section 2: Shall be the Chairperson of the Social/Cultural Committee.

Section 3: Shall conduct outreach activities on behalf of the organization, in conjunction with the Publicity Secretary and in consultation with the President.

ARTICLE XXII: THE PROVOST

Section 1: Shall maintain order and decorum during meetings as directed by the President.

Section 2: Shall be the official timekeeper during meetings.

Section 3: Shall count and tally votes taken on various issues, except during elections.

Section 4: Shall enforce fines for lateness or disruptive behaviors as stipulated in the By-laws.

ARTICLE XXIII: THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

Section 1: The organization shall have one elected Internal Auditor, who shall not be a member of the Executive Committee.

Section 2: The Internal Auditor shall appoint from the membership one or more individuals to assist him/her in the auditing functions.

ARTICLE XXIV: AUDIT

Section 1: There shall be an annual audit of all the organization's financial transactions and books of accounts.

Section 2: Any member may request an audit of any office based on probable cause (suspicion of fraud and/or misuse of the organization's funds, properties, etc).

Section 3: A request detailing the allegations shall be made in writing and submitted to the general body for approval by one third (1/3) of members present at a general meeting.

Section 4: The Internal Auditor shall initiate an investigation of the allegation within thirty (30) days of receipt of the request.

Section 5: Upon completion of the investigation, the Internal Auditor shall present the findings to the general body for deliberation and decision.

ARTICLE XXV: FINANCE

Section 1: The Executive Committee shall prepare the annual operating budget of the organization, which shall include the annual budgets submitted to it by various committees.

Section 2: The President shall present the organization's annual budget not later than the March general meeting.

Section 3: A simple majority vote of the members present shall be required to approve the organization's annual operating budget.

Section 4: A temporary and /or supplementary budget shall be presented for approval as needed.

ARTICLE XXVI: EXPENSE ACCOUNT

Section 1: The President and the General Secretary shall each maintain an expense account.

Section 2: The expense account shall be replenished upon request. The request shall be accompanied by documents and receipts and presented to the Financial Secretary for approval and reimbursement.

ARTICLE XXVII: THE GENERAL ELECTION

Section 1: Election of each office shall be by majority votes cast.

Section 2: Each eligible member shall be entitled to one vote.

Section 3: Ballot shall be secret and shall bear the names of the candidates for the respective offices.

Section 4: The Electoral Committee shall certify the results of the election to the General Secretary. This information shall be preserved for six (6) months to one (1) year for auditing purposes.

Section 5: There shall be no absentee ballots.

Section 6: **Allegations**

- (a) Allegations of electoral irregularities shall be in writing, and addressed to the President within thirty (30) days of the election.
- (b) The General Assembly shall appoint a 5-member committee, to investigate the allegations and report to the general body within thirty (30) days.
- (c) If allegations are found to be true, the General Assembly shall call for a special election.

ARTICLE XXVIII: QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELECTED OFFICE

Section 1: A candidate must be a registered member in good financial standing for at least one year.

Section 2: A candidate must have attended at least three (3) meetings within the year. Attendance in any of the NCGC committees shall be deemed sufficient for this requirement.

Section 3: Any member in good financial standing may nominate as many candidates as possible.

Section 4: A candidate can be nominated more than once during the same election.

Section 5: Nomination of officers shall commence at the August general meeting.

Section 6: There shall be a general election of all officers at the November general meeting of every two years.

Section 7: New officers shall assume office at the January general meeting following that election.

Section 8: In the event an election does not hold, it shall be held on a date approved by the general house.

Section 9: A nominee may be disqualified if any of the following applies:

- (a) Any member who is not in good financial standing as defined by Sections 1 and 2 above.
- (b) Any member found guilty of misappropriating the organization's funds or misuse of properties.
- (c) Any member previously removed by impeachment.

ARTICLE XXIX: SPECIAL ELECTIONS

Section 1: Any vacant elected office shall be filled by a special election within sixty (60) days of the announcement of such vacancy by the President.

Section 2: Upon the announcement of the vacancy, the President shall appoint a member to fill the vacant office until a special election is held.

Section 3: Any member in good financial standing can be appointed into any vacant office.

ARTICLE XXX: TERM OF OFFICE

Section 1: No member shall be elected to any one office for more than two consecutive terms

Section 2: A single term shall be for a duration of two (2) years.

ARTICLE XXXI: CONDITIONS FOR VACANT OFFICES

Section 1: Determination of vacancy shall exist if *any* of the following conditions occur:

- (a) An incumbent officer fails, without acceptable excuse to attend three consecutive executive meetings.
- (b) An incumbent officer resigns, and the resignation is accepted by the Executive Committee.
- (c) Death of an elected officer.
- (d) Relocation of an elected officer.
- (e) Impeachment of an elected officer.

Section 2: Any position not filled during general elections shall exist as vacant offices.

ARTICLE XXXII: IMPEACHMENT PROCEDURES

Section 1: In the event that an elected officer is in dereliction of his/her duties as established by the Constitution, such an officer shall be liable to impeachment.

Section 2: Process of Impeachment:

- (a) An impeachment allegation shall be initiated in writing by a member in good financial standing to the general body.
- (b) The general body shall appoint five members in good financial standing who will constitute a Review Panel to investigate and report

their findings of the allegations to the general body.

(c) A motion for impeachment shall be moved and seconded by members in good financial standing at the general meeting.

(d) Voting for impeachment motion shall take place at the next general meeting after the Review Panel has reported its findings to the general body.

Section 3: An impeachment vote shall be by two-thirds (2/3) of votes cast at the general meeting in which the Review Panel report and impeachment motion are debated.

ARTICLE XXXIII: ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Adoption of this Constitution shall be by two thirds (2/3) of votes cast at the general meeting in which the motion for adoption is made.

ARTICLE XXXIV: AMENDMENT

Section 1: Proposition for amending any provision of this Constitution shall be in writing and addressed to the general body.

Section 2: Any such proposal shall be placed on the general meeting's agenda within sixty (60) days of such proposal.

Section 3: Amendment to this Constitution shall be by two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast by members in good financial standing at the general meeting in which the amendment is debated.

ARTICLE XXXV: DISSOLUTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES

Section 1: If for any unforeseen reason the organization is to be dissolved, all members in good financial standing shall be formally informed of the motion to discuss the dissolution.

Section 2: The motion to dissolve shall be by two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast by members in good financial standing present at the meeting in which the motion is debated.

Section 3: The consequent disbursement of the assets and liabilities of the organization shall be discussed at this meeting.

ARTICLE XXXVI: AFFIRMATION

This Constitution and its By-Laws shall be binding on all members of NCGC.

THE BY- LAWS OF THE NIGERIAN COMMUNITY IN GREATER CLEVELAND

ARTICLE I: QUORUM

Section 1: The quorum for general meetings shall be ten members, comprising five (5) general members and five (5) executive members.

Section 2: No official business can be conducted at any time without a quorum.

Section 3: The quorum for the executive committee meeting shall be by simple majority of the members.

Section 4: Failure to hold a general meeting for two consecutive months defers further deliberations to the Executive Officers.

ARTICLE II: RIGHTS, BENEFITS, AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS IN GOOD FINANCIAL STANDING

Section 1: Members shall have the right to vote and be voted for. This right is not extended to honorary members, non-registered members and those members under 18-years of age.

Section 2: Members shall be eligible to receive NCGC publications, assistance, and programs available to members as determined by the general body.

Section 3: Death Benefits

The survivor(s) of any deceased member shall be entitled to the following benefits:

- (a) A wake/vigil by the organization.

(b) A check in the amount stated below shall be given to the bereaved family at the time of the wake/vigil.

- i. Membership of less than one (1) year should receive their dues back.
- ii. Membership of more than one (1) year but less than two (2) years will receive \$250.00.
- iii. Membership of more than two (2) but less than three (3) years will receive \$500.00.
- iv. Membership of more than three (3) but less than four (4) years will receive \$1,000.00.
- v. Membership of more than four (4) but less than five (5) years will receive \$1,500.00.
- vi. Membership of five (5) years or more will receive \$2,000.00.

(a) The organization has the option of paying any of the amounts in full or in up to three instalments within a year.

(b) In the event that a deceased member is financially delinquent in the current year, the family of the deceased shall have the option of paying the delinquent fees in order to receive the full death benefits. Benefits are lost if delinquent for more than a year.

(c) In the event of the death of a member's relative, NCGC shall participate in organizing a condolence visit if informed by the member.

(d) Where there is more than one member from any family, the condolence visit shall be organized jointly at the venue of their choice

Section 4: **Wedding/Marriage Benefits**

- (a) A member who is in good financial standing for at least, two (2) consecutive years shall receive a cash gift of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250).
- (b) This privilege shall be accorded to every member one time only.
- (c) The organization shall be notified of the wedding/marriage at least thirty (30) days in advance.

Section 5: **Ceremony Attendance and Gift**

- (a) At the discretion of the Executive Committee, the organization shall be represented at a ceremony to which it is invited.
- (b) The gift to be presented, if any, shall be an amount not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100).

Section 6: **Ticket and Membership Discounts**

- (a) Members may enjoy reasonable discounts in all organizational activities in which a gate fee is charged.
- (b) The general body shall decide when discounts may be given.
- (c) Whoever sells tickets shall give full account of the tickets received.
- (d) All unsold tickets must be returned on the approved date.
- (e) Any ticket not returned on approved date has to be paid for by the seller.
- (f) Every seller must sign for the number of tickets received.

- (g) Any member who fails to comply with the above stipulations will lose membership rights, pending compliance with Sections (c) through

Section 7: Send-Off for Ex-Member

- (a) In the event that a member in good financial standing for three (3) consecutive years is relocating out of Northeast Ohio, the organization shall organize an appreciative send-off party, not costing more than two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00).
- (b) The organization shall present a plaque to the member at the occasion.

Section 8: Student Rights and Benefits

- (a) Student members shall have all the voting rights and privileges accorded any other member.
- (b) All other financial benefits shall be one quarter (1/4) of the same benefits given to individual members.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP CONDUCT/FINES

Section 1: Membership Conduct During Meetings

- (a) A member must be recognized by the President or his/her designee before he or she addresses the general body.
- (b) A member recognized to speak should not be interrupted.
- (c) All members should accord courtesy to others at all times during meetings.
- (d) A member will be excused from meetings for misconduct or

disruptive behavior.

- (e) Any excused member shall be referred to Membership Affairs Committee for further actions.

Section 2: **FINES**

All fines shall be determined by Membership Affairs Committee subject to approval by the general body.

ARTICLE IV: DATES, FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF GENERAL MEETINGS

Section 1: The general meeting shall be held once a month on the third Sunday of every month.

Section 2: The duration of the general meeting shall be for a period of two hours from 3pm to 5pm; unless extended by a motion made by the Provost or any other officer of the organization.

Section 3: Any time extension shall not exceed thirty minutes in the first instance.

Section 4: The agenda shall be prepared by the executive committee and sent to members in advance of the date of general meeting.

Section 5: Once a quorum is formed, the agenda may be modified by the members present.

ARTICLE V: MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING - CONTENTS, DISTRIBUTION, AND ADOPTION

Section 1: The minutes of the general meeting shall include the date, time, place of the meeting, and members present.

Section 2: Consensus, decisions, motions made, and their voting results shall be recorded.

Section 3: The minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda for the next meeting, shall be sent to members either electronically or in hardcopy before the next general meeting.

Section 4: The minutes of the previous meeting shall be corrected and adopted as soon as the quorum has been formed and the meeting called to order.

Section 5: All corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting in which the corrections were made.

Section 6: The adopted minutes shall be signed by the President and General Secretary, and be filed as permanent official record of the organization.

ARTICLE VI: DUES, ASSESSMENTS, SOLICITATIONS AND DISBURSEMENTS

Section 1: Members are encouraged to pay their annual membership dues during the first quarter of each calendar year.

Section 2: Annual dues may be paid by installment within the first six (6) months of the calendar year.

Section 3: Individual members shall pay:

- (a) A one-time registration fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00) for all new members.
- (b) Annual dues of one hundred dollars (\$100.00), which must be paid within the calendar year.
- (c) Registered members, who become inactive for whatever reason, can return to good financial standing, by bringing their account up to date. This clause applies to all membership categories.

Section 4: Family members shall pay:

- (a) A one-time registration fee of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00).
- (b) Annual dues of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00), which must be paid within the calendar year.

Section 5: Student members shall pay:

- (a) A one-time registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).
- (b) Annual dues of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).

Section 5: **Change of Marital Status**

- (a) If the marital status of a member changes from single to married, that member has the option of maintaining that status for the remaining duration of that financial year or pay up the difference on a pro-rated basis.
- (b) Likewise, if the status of a married member changes, their annual dues shall be pro-rated and credited towards the next year's annual

dues.

Section 6: **Miscellaneous Fees, Levies and Contributions**

- (a) The organization may impose levies during the year, which shall be determined by the general body and shall reflect the ratio of 3:2 for family and individual members, respectively.
- (b) All dues and assessments are payable in cash (USD), cashier's check, money order, or personal check.
- (c) All checks returned for non-sufficient fund carry a thirty-five dollar (\$35.00) penalty or the actual fees charged by the bank, whichever is greater.
- (d) Members shall be denied benefits if dues, levies, and/or other assessments are not paid.
- (e) All membership fees, dues, and levies are non-refundable.
- (f) Legitimate contributions may be accepted by the organization.

Section 7: **Disbursements**

- (a) All disbursements of funds shall be for budgeted items only, or for expenses authorized by the action of the general body.
- (b) Any disbursement not meeting these criteria shall be deemed irregular and improper, and must be repaid immediately.
- (c) Expenses made or incurred on behalf of the organization by any member, shall be reimbursed upon the tendering of a valid receipt or invoice. The receipt or invoice shall be submitted to the Financial Secretary for processing and reimbursement.

(d) Under no circumstance shall a member co-mingle or withhold the organization's funds in lieu of any expected payment or settlement from the organization.

(e) All disbursements outside the approved budget shall be authorized by the general body.

(f) Any emergency disbursement outside the approved budget shall not exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

Section 8: Expense Accounts

(a) The President shall maintain an expense account in the amount of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00), to be replenished as necessary.

(b) The General Secretary shall maintain an expense account in the amount of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00). The General Secretary shall operate a revolving expense account.

ARTICLE VII: PUBLICATIONS

The Organization shall publish the following:

(a) Independence Anniversary Program Booklet

(b) Minutes of the general meeting

(c) Calendar of events

(d) Annual budget

(e) Special reports

ARTICLE VIII: AUDIT

Internal audit of the organization's finances shall be conducted and published twice a year during the months of June and December.

ARTICLE IX: FISCAL YEAR

The organization's fiscal year shall start at 12: 01 a.m. on January 1st of each calendar year and end at midnight of December 31st of the same year.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENT OF THE BY-LAWS

Any provision of these By-Laws can be amended by a simple majority of the votes cast in a general meeting.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THIS CONSTITUTION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSENSUS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF THE CONSTITUTION REVIEW COMMITTEE:

1. Dr. Moses Z. Timta (Chairman) _____
2. Mr. Paul K. Abiola _____
3. Mr. Abulime Alli _____
4. Mr. Patrick Egbo _____
5. Elizabeth Ajadi _____