

Harvard Undergraduates for Environmental Justice Constitution

Article I: Organization Name

The name of the organization shall be Harvard Undergraduates for Environmental Justice.

Article II: Purpose

Harvard Undergraduates for Environmental Justice (HUEJ) has a dual purpose, to **educate** and **mobilize** members of the Harvard and surrounding community to protect the Earth's resources and ecosystems. HUEJ works to emphasize the **justice** in environmental justice, focusing on communities and areas disproportionately affected by environmental issues due to compounding social and historical factors. Harvard students will benefit substantially from an opportunity to confront pressing issues regarding the environment in our society today and to look critically at the injustices inherent in those issues.

Working Definition: Environmental justice describes a just, sustainable, and equitable world. It recognizes that, in addition to the blanket injustice perpetrated on the Earth and all its inhabitants by global climate change, low-income and BIPOC communities have been disproportionately burdened by environmental degradation for the longest. Working for environmental justice involves dismantling the systems that have caused targeted environmental injury, resisting ongoing oppression, and repairing the harm done by polluted air, contaminated water, food deserts, inaccessible housing, and all other dimensions of environmental injustice both physical and social. Its intersectionality links environmental justice to other modes of resistance to structures including systemic racism, capitalist oppression, and patriarchal power.

The three objectives HUEJ will strive to fulfill every semester are the following:

- (1) to **educate** its members and the Harvard community on EJ issues,
- (2) to **collaborate with and support other organizations at Harvard** whose work aligns with EJ work, and
- (3) to meaningfully **engage with communities outside of Harvard** to further EJ.

While HUEJ activities may fulfill multiple or all objectives, the following examples fall roughly into the three categories.

Examples of efforts that fulfill objective (1) include, but are not limited to:

- Holding information sessions or demonstrations about ongoing EJ issues
- Hosting informed speakers
- Screening documentaries

Examples of efforts that fulfill objective (2) include, but are not limited to:

- Publicizing events from and making space for more DEI voices in environmental spaces on campus
- Co-hosting events or projects with other campus environmental groups
- Co-hosting events or projects with affinity groups impacted by EJ issues

Examples of efforts that fulfill objective (3) include, but are not limited to:

- Organizing or attending rallies
- Attending hearings and lobbying for EJ in the Cambridge and greater Boston area
- Service work with local communities that furthers EJ efforts, e.g. tree planting

Article III: Membership

1. Membership in this organization shall be open to all students in good standing currently enrolled in Harvard College, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or physical disability.*
2. Members must be students of Harvard University.*
3. Membership shall be retained until the student severs relations with the University whether by graduation or otherwise. Membership will be retained during the vacation and recesses of the university.
4. To become a member, students must go through a short comp process. See the section "Becoming a Member" below.
5. To be considered an active member, students must attend weekly meetings and contribute to the club's best interests.
 - a. While regular attendance is required, flexibility will be given around extenuating personal and academic circumstances. Members should communicate as much as possible with the coordinators about planned and sudden absences.
6. Individuals beyond the Harvard community are encouraged to participate in activities and programs.
7. If a member of the board wishes to resign, they must maintain their duties until another individual is voted in to take their place.
 - a. In extenuating circumstances where a board member cannot maintain their duties, the other officers must come to a consensus about a division of responsibility until a new individual can be voted in.
8. Behavior that obstructs the goals of HUEJ will not be tolerated. Dismissals should not be taken lightly, but the Coordinator(s) and DEI Chair(s) share the power to dismiss a member who is not acting in the club's best interest. They must issue a statement to this individual with their agreed-upon reasoning. They must strive for transparency in this process where it does not overstep reasonable respect for privacy on the part of the dismissed individual.

Becoming a Member

1. The process of becoming a member shall be referred to as comp.
2. **The purpose of comp is to legitimize involvement and provide an engaged foundation for new members** that is in the best interest of new and existing members; **it is not meant to act as a barrier to entry.**
3. The regular comp cycle will run within the first four weeks of the semester and last 2-3 weeks.
4. The requirements for comp may change slightly, but must follow the general outline as follows:
 - a. **Regular attendance of general meetings** beyond the interest meeting.

- b. **Engagement with a piece of educational media** and materials provided by HUEJ chairs about current EJ issues, i.e. reading and discussing an article or watching and discussing a video
 - c. **Presenting a project idea that would fulfill one or more of the objectives of HUEJ** (see Article II: Purpose and Article V: Projects), along with a rough plan of how that project could be executed. *While these projects may not be implemented immediately, they will be noted as potential projects, and enthusiastic new members may want to launch and lead the project in HUEJ that or the following semester.*
 - d. When applicable, attendance of additional events or activities HUEJ is holding, e.g. a poster-making session, is highly encouraged
5. **All officers are encouraged to help run comp** during the regular cycle, i.e. the beginning of each semester.
 6. **One officer of any position shall volunteer to run “rolling comp”** throughout the semester to support and engage with any students interested in becoming members outside of the regular cycle. The rolling comp may look slightly different in composition and timeline but should comprise essentially the same requirements structure.

Article IV: Officers

1. The **Coordinator(s)*** shall organize the group and have general supervision and control of its activities and programs, including financial oversight of the club. They will handle all formal correspondence between members and officers of the group. Duties will be divided equally among the coordinators.
2. The **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Chair(s)*** shall ensure the importance of diverse representation within our organization and build HUEJ’s relations with other organizations on campus to facilitate their vital participation in environmental justice discussions and programs. This will be achieved by conducting outreach to both on-campus and off-campus cultural affinity groups, activist groups, etc., and developing partnerships through event organizing, including looking out for and ensuring HUEJ is present at events hosted by other organizations.
3. The **Treasurer(s)*** shall have general charge of the group's financial affairs. They shall keep accurate records of these affairs and communicate with the Coordinators regularly.
4. The **Communication Chair(s)** shall inform the Harvard and outstanding community of the interests and actions of HUEJ. They are responsible for updating social media and distributing flyers around campus. They are also responsible for internal communications within the club.
5. The **Social Chair(s)** shall organize social events that bring together members and prospective members of HUEJ to build community within the club.

Organizations are ever-evolving entities, and HUEJ membership may ebb and flow.

*In the event that there are not enough officers, the three officer positions of Coordinator, DEI Chair, and Treasurer must be given priority. Tasks including but not limited to Communication Chair and Social Chair tasks may be delegated among the chairs.

In the case of more than five members interested and able to fill officer positions, all positions may be co-managed by more than one person.

Article V: Projects

1. Each semester, HUEJ shall work on projects that collectively fulfill all three objectives of the organization (see Article II: Purpose).
2. Projects may fulfill more than one of the objectives, and more than one project may fulfill the same objective.
3. Members may choose which projects to be involved in, but must help with at least one project.
4. Projects will be proposed at the beginning of each semester and voted upon by HUEJ members. Capacity permitting, ideally at least three projects will be chosen for each semester.
5. Projects do not have to span the length of the semester or run concurrently; however, capacity permitting, longer-term and/or concurrent projects are encouraged. In the latter case, it may be helpful to assign project leaders and working groups for each project.

Article VI: Elections

1. Elections for officer positions are **offered once a semester**, near the end of the semester. Spring semester elections may be offered slightly earlier to accommodate a longer transition period before the summer break.
2. **All positions are offered** each election cycle if there are more than three candidates.
 - a. If there are not enough candidates to fill all positions, see the note in Article IV: Officers about which positions must be given priority. If it is clear that only three candidates will run, only those three positions will be offered.
3. **Joint or co-chair positions are encouraged** when capacity allows; candidates may run individually or in pairs, but may end up working with another member regardless of whether they ran as a pair.
4. **Before running for any position, all members must have a conversation with a current chair** to discuss the responsibilities of the role and any questions they may have. This helps the current board gauge interest, and helps HUEJ have a more informed and equitable transition.
5. There will be an **application to formally indicate candidacy**.
6. **Ranked choice voting** will be used in the case of multiple candidates for a position; candidates may run for multiple positions.
7. Voting will be **anonymous**, and the process for candidacy and voting will otherwise be as transparent as possible.
8. When voting is complete, elected officers will be notified by email, and then the list of elected officers will be formally and promptly communicated to all members.
9. Whenever possible, **newly elected officers will “shadow”** or work in conjunction with existing officers until the end of the semester of the election cycle.
10. In all cases, a transition meeting must be conducted between the previous and newly-elected officers.

Article VII: Meetings

1. Meetings of the groups shall be held on a regular basis for the purpose of determining policy, activities, programs, and other business. Special meetings of the group may be called by the Coordinator/s, or any five members of the group.
2. Decisions may be made by a simple majority of the group.
3. Notice of regular and special meetings shall be communicated to all members of the group by the Coordinators and Communications Chairs.
4. All members shall have one vote with respect to any resolutions put forward during a meeting.
5. Proposals will be submitted directly to the Coordinators.
6. Proposals will be reviewed during weekly meetings and approved by simple majority. Members who are not present at the time of the voting may vote within the same day via written proxy.

Article VIII: Amendments

1. Basic familiarity with this constitution is encouraged for all members and required for all officers; the constitution should be reviewed with reasonable consistency.
2. The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the group.
3. Any member of the group may propose an amendment. Proposals shall be sent in writing and added to the agenda prior to a meeting so that the group may debate the proposal.
4. Alternatively, if a majority of the group feels that there are enough amendments to discuss, a constitution review meeting may be held specifically to amend the constitution. All members of the group must be notified of the meeting and given a reasonable chance to attend, and all amendments agreed upon must be communicated to the membership promptly.