

Human Rights Research and Education Centre

Constitution

1. MISSION STATEMENT

Values

1.1 The human rights of individuals and peoples represent a universal system of values upon which the activities and interventions of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre are based. These values include:

- Human dignity;
- Equality;
- Respect for fundamental freedoms;
- Social justice and the right of each person to economic, psychological, physical and democratic security;
- The right of peoples to self-determination.

Human rights imply a relationship of indivisibility and interdependence as between themselves.

The mandate

1.2 The Centre is a university-based research and teaching institution. As such, it promotes research training and support, and the creation and dissemination of knowledge and analysis with respect to human rights.

1.3 The Centre has obligations vis-à-vis the community. As such, it contributes to the mobilisation of knowledge while ensuring respect for, and promotion of, human rights values.

1.4 As a research institution in a university context, the Centre places great importance on the following operating principles:

- Academic freedom;
- Freedom of expression;
- Research and communication ethics;
- Respect for others.

Principles of governance

- 1.5 The Centre has a mandate to analyse this system critically, paying particular attention to the needs of the holders of rights, and to the obligations of non-state, public and institutional actors who should ensure respect for such rights.

Human rights: a multidisciplinary concept at the heart of public policy across Canada and the world

- 1.6 The mandate of the Centre presumes an acceptance of the need to approach issues regarding human rights from a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective, both in order to respect such rights and to explore that which they require in a complex, interconnected world. To this end, the Centre intends to place particular emphasis on public policy questions concerning peace, migration and immigration, health, environment, international trade and investment, poverty and vulnerable groups.

The means

- 1.7 In order to fulfil its mandate, the Centre will place particular emphasis on the following strategies:
- Its mandate takes into account the University Strategic Plan ;
 - It achieves its mandate through strategic use of new communication technologies;
 - It puts its mandate into action taking into account the different contexts of today's world: local, national, regional, international and global;
 - It devotes a significant part of its resources to the research and corresponding needs of graduate students from all disciplines and of research centres and institutes at the University of Ottawa ;
 - It will ensure that it surrounds itself with partners, researchers and collaborators that are representative of its mandate;
 - In order to make real the desire to come to a better understanding of the global system of human rights, it will ensure that it retains both the quality and the capacity to welcome foreign students and visitors.

2. MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRE

- 2.1 The overall management of the Centre is conducted by a Management Committee constituted according to the terms of this Constitution. The day-to-day administration of the Centre shall be conducted by the Research Director and the Executive Director with the support of the Management Committee.

Research Director

- 2.2 The appointment and term of the Research Director shall be according to the following conditions:

- The appointment of a Research Director shall be made, following consultation with the Management Committee, by the Deans of Common Law, Civil Law and Social Sciences;
- The holder of the position of Research Director shall be a full-time professor at the University of Ottawa from one of the partner faculties;
- The term for this position shall be five years, renewable for a maximum of five years.

- 2.3 The responsibilities of the Research Director shall be as follows:

- Responsible for the overall direction of the Centre's research, teaching and outreach;
- Responsible for taking the lead in the preparation of the Centre's Strategic Plan and Annual Reports;
- Responsible for representing the Centre at internal and external conferences, events and meetings;
- Responsible for facilitating relations between the Centre and the Advisory Board.

Executive Director

- 2.4 The appointment and term of the Executive Director shall be according to the following conditions:

- Appointment of an Executive Director shall be made by a temporary appointment committee constituted by the Research Director and the Deans of Common law, Civil law and Social Sciences (or their delegates);
- This position shall be a regular full-time indeterminate administrative position of the University of Ottawa;

2.5 The main responsibilities of the Executive Director shall be as follows:

- Responsible for the overall management of research activities, the human, financial, budgetary, physical and material resources of the Centre;
- Participates in the development and implementation of the Centre's areas of strategic research and development;
- Promotes the Centre;
- Responsible for representing the Centre at internal and external conferences, events and meetings;
- Responsible for preparing the Centre's budget;
- Responsible for assisting the Research Director in producing and finalizing the Strategic Plan;
- Responsible for assisting the Research Director in the preparation of the Centre's Annual Reports.

Joint Responsibilities of Research Director and Executive Director

Strategic Plan

- 2.6 Within the first six months of appointment, the Research Director, with assistance from the Executive Director, shall prepare a five-year Strategic Plan for the Centre in relation to its research, teaching, outreach and related activities. The plan shall be presented to the assembly of Members of the Centre and to the Advisory Board, and comments and suggestions sought. The final version of the Strategic Plan shall be approved by the Management Committee.
- 2.7 Copies of the final version of the Strategic Plan shall be sent to the Deans of the sponsoring Faculties, and to the Office of the Vice-President (Research). The Strategic Plan shall be available for consultation at the Centre.

Annual Report

- 2.8 The Research Director, with full assistance from the Executive Director, is charged with producing an Annual Report, setting out the Centre's most important achievements and challenges in the year just ended, the key aims objectives for the coming year (and their relation to the five-year Strategic Plan), and a financial status report.

- 2.9 The Annual Report shall be completed by June 1st of each year. It shall be approved by the Management Committee after discussion. The final version shall be sent to the Deans of the sponsoring Faculties, to the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and to the Advisory Board. The Annual Report shall also be available for consultation at the Centre and online.

Internal Committee Structure

- 2.10 Until such time as the number of members and associate members increases so as to justify a more elaborate committee structure, the committee work of the Centre shall be divided amongst two bodies – the Management Committee and the Advisory Board.

Management Committee

- 2.11 The Management Committee is the governing body of the Centre. Both the Research Director and the Executive Director are accountable to the Management Committee.
- 2.12 The Management Committee is made up of 9 members (or 10 if the holder of the Gordon F. Henderson Chair is not also the Research Director). The composition of the Management Committee shall be as follows:
- Members *ex officio*: the Research Director; the Executive Director; one Centre member from each of the sponsoring faculties, the mode of appointment being determined by the relevant faculty; and in cases where the Gordon F. Henderson Chair does not happen to be the Research Director, the holder of the Gordon F. Henderson Human Rights Chair;
 - The balance of the regular members shall be selected as follows:
 - o 1 member shall be elected from each of the Centre's membership groups (Full Academic Members; Associate Community Members; Student Members, Associate University Members);
 - o Each membership group shall determine how its representative shall be elected;
 - o The mandate of regular members is two years renewable. (Exceptionally, and only for the first term, the Full Academic representative and the Associate Community representative shall be elected for one year renewable (renewable for the normal two year term));
 - o An up-to-date list of Management Committee members (including contact details) shall be available at the Centre.
 - The Research Director shall act as Chair for meetings of the Management Committee;

- The Executive Director acts as the secretary of the Management Committee.

2.13 The mandate and functions of the Management Committee shall be as follows

- To assist the Directors in overseeing the Centre's management, in implementing the Strategic Plan, in preparing Annual Reports, in fundraising and in managing Centre finances;
- To assist the Executive Director in developing policies and protocols regarding day-to-day activities, expenditure policies, fundraising and use of physical space;
- To review documents prepared by the Executive Director on financial and administrative matters;
- To assist the Directors in selecting members and in developing policies about membership;
- To assist the Directors in developing policies regarding public programming, and community outreach;
- To assist the Directors in selecting and organizing public lectures and other Centre scholarly activities;
- To assist the Directors in overseeing the promotion of research and in designing research strategies;
- To elaborate procedures and protocols to ensure transparency and to avoid conflicts of interest in the exercise of these functions.

2.14 The Management Committee shall meet at least once per academic term, and at least three times per calendar year. Binding decisions may be taken provided that five Committee's members are present at the time the relevant decision is taken.

Advisory Board

2.15 The composition of the Advisory Board shall be as follows:

The Advisory Board is made up of a maximum of 12 members, including

- The Deans of sponsoring faculties (3 members) *ex officio*;
- The other members of the Advisory Board shall be appointed by the Management Committee. Potential Board members shall be drawn from the following groups:
 1. Key institutional partners (e.g., relevant centres and institutes within the University of Ottawa or within neighbouring academic institutions (3 members);
 2. Selected community partners that are active in the primary research domains of the Centre (3 members);
 3. Senior Researcher(s) in the field of human rights and social justice from other Canadian or foreign universities (3 members);

- There shall be no overlapping membership as between the Advisory Board and the Management Committee.
- 2.16 The Chair of the Advisory Board shall rotate between the sponsoring faculties on a biannual basis.
- 2.17 The mandate and functions of the Advisory Board shall be as follows:
- Providing comments and suggestions regarding the Centre's most important policy initiatives, including: the Centre's five-year Strategic Plan and the amendment of the Centre's Constitution;
 - Facilitating the outreach of the Centre into the external human rights community;
 - Promoting both the research and the education mandates of the Centre.
- 2.18 The Advisory Board shall meet at least once per calendar year. There shall be no requirements as to quorum except with respect to meetings dealing with the Strategic Plan and/or amendments to the Constitution. Regarding these matters, decisions may be taken provided that five Committee's members are present at the time the relevant decision is taken.
- 2.19 The mandate of members (other than Deans) shall be two years renewable. (Exceptionally, and only for the first term, half of the members shall serve terms of three years renewable (renewable for the normal two year term)).

Membership

- 2.20 The appointment of Centre Members is vested in the Management Committee. In deciding whom to appoint as Members, the Management Committee shall be guided by the terms of the Constitution regarding Membership and by the Mission Statement which appears at the outset of the Constitution.
- 2.21 Membership is organized into the following categories:
- *Full academic members;*
 - *Associate community members;*
 - *Graduate student members;*
 - *Affiliated university members.*

Full academic members

- 2.22 Full academic members shall be full-time professors at the University of Ottawa. Non-full-time professors and others who wish to be associated with the Centre

should nominate themselves as Associate community members or as Graduate student members.

- 2.23 Initiative for appointment of full academic members may come either from the candidates themselves, or from the Centre itself (speaking through its Management Committee), or from the Deans of the sponsoring faculties. In the latter case, Deans should verify with the Research Director (who should, where possible, consult with the Management Committee) that the proposed candidate is suitable for nomination as a member of the Centre.

Associate community members

- 2.24 Associate community members may be drawn from the wider human rights community (as described in the Mission Statement which appears at the outset of this Constitution).
- 2.25 Initiative for appointment of Associate community members may come from the candidates themselves, from the Centre, or from one of the Deans of the sponsoring faculties. Decisions regarding membership are ultimately a matter for the Management Committee.

Student members

- 2.26 Student members may be drawn from amongst graduate students pursuing work under the Direction of a Full academic member of the Centre, or involved in human rights and social justice projects within the three sponsoring faculties.
- 2.27 Initiative for appointment of student members may come from the candidates themselves, from the Centre, or from members in other categories of membership. Decisions regarding membership are ultimately a matter for the Management Committee.

Affiliated university members

- 2.28 Affiliated university members are members of the University of Ottawa community who are neither Full academic members of Student members; they are seen as capable of representing the interests of the University community.
- 2.29 Initiative for appointment of Associate university members may come from the candidates themselves, from the Centre, or from one of the Deans of the sponsoring faculties. Decisions regarding membership are ultimately a matter for the Management Committee.

Roles and responsibilities of members

- 2.30 The attendant roles and responsibilities of membership shall be determined as soon as practicable by the Management Committee. Membership rules will reflect the principle of reciprocity of rights and duties between members and the Centre and the acceptance of Centre's mission and values as stated in Constitution. This information should then be set out in a document held on file at the Centre, and, if deemed appropriate, eventually incorporated in this Constitution by means amendment.

The Centre's Languages

- 2.31 The languages of the Centre are French and English.

Amendment of the Constitution

- 2.32 Amendments to this Constitution may be *proposed* by any of the member of the Management Committee.
- 2.33 Any proposed amendment must set out clearly both the existing Constitution in its entirety, and the proposed new wording or new provisions.
- 2.34 The proposed amendment must be presented to the Advisory Board which may make comments and suggestions as it deems appropriate.
- 2.35 The proposed amendment may be modified, as deemed appropriate by the proposer, in response to comments and suggestions from the Advisory Board, and presented in due form (as set out in this part) for adoption.
- 2.36 To be *adopted*, a proposed amendment must be approved by at least two-thirds of all members of the Management Committee.
- 2.37 If an amendment is adopted, the Executive Director shall prepare a new version of the Constitution reflecting both the newly adopted amendment and, as a footnote, the text as amended. This historical version shall be kept on file at the Centre. An up-to-date current version of the Constitution shall also be made available for consultation at the Centre.

Human Rights Research and Education Centre

Values: The values which form the basis of Centre's mandate exist in a relationship of interdependence and are as follows: human dignity; equality, respect for fundamental freedoms; the right of each person to security and the right of peoples to self-determination.

Mission: The Centre is a university-based research and teaching institution. As such, it promotes research training and support, and the creation and dissemination of knowledge and analysis with respect to human rights.

Governance: Human rights are based upon a system of governance, a system whose spirit and underlying values the Centre intends to respect. The principles of governance of the Centre therefore respect the rights and needs of relevant actors and the complexity and multidisciplinary of the issues raised by its mission.

Means: The Centre sets about its mission by taking account the global context: local, national, regional, international and global; and by making strategic use of new communication technologies. It promotes wide participation in its governance, and multinational and broad community participation in the implementation of its Strategic Plan.