

CONSTITUTION

OF

Urantia Society of Greater New York (USGNY)

USGNY was chartered on 04/17/1988 by the Fifth Epochal Fellowship (now The Urantia Book Fellowship, hereinafter The Fellowship); and established as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization on February 17, 1994 in the State of New York (Certificate number: 208140).

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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ARTICLE 1—NAME

The name of this organization shall be Urantia Society of Greater New York, hereinafter referred to as “the Society” or USGNY.”

ARTICLE 2—PURPOSE

The purpose of the Society is to foster the study, dissemination, and living of the teachings of The Urantia Book in order “to dramatize the loyalties of religion; to magnify the lures of truth, beauty, and goodness; to foster the attractions of supreme values; to enhance the service of unselfish fellowship; to glorify the potentials of family life; to promote religious education; to provide wise counsel and spiritual guidance; and to encourage group worship.” (UB 99:6.2)

ARTICLE 3—AFFILIATION

The Society, while autonomous in the conduct of its local affairs, is subject to the constitution of The Fellowship, and, by virtue of its charter as a constituent Society of The Fellowship, its members are ipso facto members of The Fellowship.

ARTICLE 4—MEMBERSHIP

Section 4.1. **Qualifications:** Any person who has:

- a. Read The Urantia Book in its entirety or who, as adjudged by the Membership Committee, evidences a clear desire to understand and live the teachings of The Urantia Book while in the process of completing his/her reading of The Urantia Book
- b. Attended at least two (2) Society meetings in the year prior to initiation
- c. Read the Society and Fellowship constitutions and declared his/her willingness to accept and abide by them
- d. Attained the age of sixteen years is eligible for membership in the Society. Membership in any religious organization or fraternal society shall have no bearing on a candidate’s eligibility for Society membership.

Section 4.2. **Application for Membership:** Application for membership in the Society shall be made in writing to the Society’s Membership Committee Chair in the form determined by that committee.

Section 4.3. **Acceptance or Rejection** of Applicants: Having verified the eligibility and qualification of each applicant for membership, the Society’s Membership Committee shall report its findings to the Society’s Governing Committee, which shall accept or reject each applicant via majority vote.

Section 4.4. Initiation of Members: The initiation of new members shall be under the supervision of the Society's Membership Committee and shall consist of the ceremony prescribed in the form determined by the Membership Committee.

Section 4.5. Transfer of Membership: A member shall have the right to transfer his/her membership from the Society to another society upon obtaining the consent of the Membership Committee of the latter society. Transfer of membership from other societies into the Society shall be governed by Section 4.1 and Section 4.2 above.

Section 4.6. Expulsion: No member shall be expelled from the Society unless, as adjudged by the Society, the attitude, conduct, or influence of such member shall be prejudicial to the interests and work of the Society. A member may not be expelled except upon:

- a. Filing by the Society Membership Committee with the Society Governing Committee of a petition for the expulsion of such a member
- b. The summoning of such member by the Society Governing Committee to show cause why his/her membership should not be revoked
- c. The affirmation, via majority vote, by the Society Governing Committee that such membership should be revoked, and
- d. The calling of a special meeting. At such special meeting, the case for expulsion shall be presented by a member of the Society Governing Committee. The accused member may present his/her own case in person or may be represented by any member of the Society. After all the evidence has been presented and all arguments have been heard, the accused member shall withdraw, and the Society shall by secret ballot affirm or reverse the decision of the Governing Committee. The decision of three-fourths of the voting members present (absentee ballots shall not be allowed) shall be final, and such decision shall be communicated in writing by e-mail or post to the member concerned within ten (10) days thereafter by the Society's Secretary. A disaffirmation by the Society shall constitute a final determination dismissing the case.

A member expelled from the Society may appeal to the Judicial Committee of The Fellowship (Section 4.4).

Section 4.7. Membership Status:

- I. A voting member is one who has been initiated into the Society and who participates in the activities of the Society by attending at least two Society meetings or events in the 12-month period prior to the Annual Business Meeting (Sections 5.1 and 5.2) and by paying dues established by the Governing Committee.

- II. A non-voting member is one who has been initiated into the Society but who fails to meet the requirements of voting membership. Non-voting membership confers all the rights and privileges as does voting membership, including membership in The Fellowship, except that non-voting members may not vote on questions put before the Society or be a Society officer or committee chairperson. A non-voting member becomes a voting member as soon as s/he meets the requirements of voting member status, at which time the Secretary will notify the member of the change in voting status.
- III. Any member shall automatically lose his/her membership status if, for a period of two years, the member does not attend any Society meetings, has not paid dues, and does not respond to Society communication.
- IV. The Secretary of the Society is required to notify in writing by e-mail or post any member of change in membership status within thirty (30) days and is required to notify The Fellowship of any additions to or deletions from membership rolls.

ARTICLE 5—MEETINGS

Section 5.1. Informal Meetings: Informal meetings shall be held at such times and for such purposes as may be determined by the members. At informal meetings non-member students of The Urantia Book and other interested visitors are welcome. The Secretary shall provide e-mail notification of all meetings (post to those members without e-mail), unless otherwise indicated in this constitution, at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting.

Section 5.2. Formal Meetings:

- I. **Annual Business Meeting:** A business meeting of the members of the Society shall be held at least once each calendar year at a time and place designated by the Governing Committee. Written notice of the meeting by e-mail or post shall be sent to all Society members at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting.
- II. **Special Business Meetings:** Special business meetings may be called at any time by the Governing Committee or upon written request (by e-mail or post) to the President of twenty per cent (20%) of the voting members. Notice of such meeting, including a statement of the purpose(s) of the meeting, shall be sent by e-mail or post at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting.
- III. **Emergency Business Meetings:** Emergency business meetings may be called at any time by the Governing Committee or upon written request to the President of twenty percent (20%) of the voting members. Notice of such meeting, including a statement of the purpose(s) of the meeting, shall be sent by e-mail or post to all Society members at least one (1) week prior to the meeting.

IV. Triennial Meetings: Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Triennial Delegate Assembly of The Fellowship may be elected at any annual or special meeting of the Society designated a Triennial Meeting. The elections shall be in accordance with the provisions of this constitution for the nomination and election of officers of the Society (Sections 6.2 and 6.3). The time of this election, the report of its results, and the certification of delegates shall be in accordance with the requirements of The Fellowship Constitution (By-Laws, Chapter VI). Notice of the meeting at which the triennial delegates are elected shall be sent by e-mail or post to all Society members at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting.

Section 5.3. Voting: Only voting members of the Society may vote on questions brought before this Society and in its elections. Unless otherwise indicated in this constitution, a majority vote shall approve any question brought before this Society.

Section 5.4. Quorum: A quorum at any formal meeting, properly called and notified, shall consist of sixty percent (60%) of the voting members in the society. The presiding officer at any meeting may vote only in the case of a tie vote. Any question presented at any meeting in which a quorum is present shall be decided by majority vote, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution.

ARTICLE 6—OFFICERS

Section 6.1. Officers: Officers of the Society shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 6.2. Nomination of Candidates: Candidates must be voting members and may be nominated by an ad hoc Nominating Committee or from the floor. Each nomination must have prior consent of the candidate. The Nominating Committee shall nominate one or more (1) candidate for each office. The Nominating Committee shall issue notice of their nominations in writing to the members of this Society for their consideration not less than two (2) weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

Section 6.3. Election of Officers: Society officers shall be elected at the Annual Business Meeting. Ballots shall be secret and shall be tallied by two members designated by the President. In the event that no candidate receives a majority of the votes, a runoff election shall be held between the two candidates receiving the most votes. In the event of a tie, balloting shall continue until a candidate has received a majority.

Section 6.4. Duties of Officers:

a. **Duties of President:** The President shall be the chief executive officer and shall preside at all Society meetings and at all meetings of the Governing Committee. The President shall

determine the need for, and appoint chairpersons for, all ad hoc committees, including the Nominating Committee.

- b. Duties of Vice-President: In the event of the inability of the President to act, the Vice-President shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President. The Vice-President may be called on by the Secretary to assist the Secretary in performing the duties listed below in Section 6.4.c., items 6 through 12 inclusive. The Vice-President shall also:
1. Forward messages from the SocAdmin e-mail list to Society members who wish to receive these messages.
 2. Maintain a calendar of events sponsored by USGNY, The Fellowship, and other appropriate Urantia Book related groups and keep members apprised of such events.
- c. Duties of Secretary: The Secretary shall have the following responsibilities:
1. Keep, preserve, and disseminate to all Society members the records of the proceedings of the formal and informal meetings of the Society.
 2. Notify in writing by e-mail or post all Society members of all Society meetings and announcements.
 3. Keep a record of attendance at all Society meetings.
 4. In the event that both the President and Vice-President are unable to act, the Secretary shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President.
 5. Report to the Secretary-General of The Fellowship all elections of Society officers within thirty (30) days (Fellowship Constitution, Section 5.4 and Fellowship By-Laws Paragraph 1.5).
 6. Upon the written request of the Secretary of any other Society or of any officer of The Fellowship, certify to the membership of any member of the Society. Upon written request of the President of The Fellowship, furnish a certified list of all members of the Society as of the date designated (Fellowship By-Laws Paragraph 1.1)
 7. By January 10 of each year, send to the Secretary of The Fellowship an official membership census (i.e., total number of members) of the Society (Fellowship By-Laws Paragraph 1.2).
 8. Report to both the Secretary-General and the Secretary of The Fellowship the expulsion of any member of the Society (Fellowship By-Laws Paragraph 1.6).
 9. Within fifteen (15) days after election, notify the Secretary of The Fellowship of the names of the Delegate and Alternate Delegate elected to the Triennial Delegate

Assembly, such notification having been certified by the President of USGNY (Fellowship By-Laws Paragraph 6.3).

10. Keep a permanent record of each Society member (Fellowship By-Laws Paragraph 1.1), both voting and non-voting, and a record of transfers of membership to or from USGNY (Fellowship By-Laws Paragraph 1.4).
11. Notify in writing by e-mail or post any Society member of change in membership status from voting to non-voting, or vice versa.

d. **Duties of Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer and shall have general supervision and control over the collection and distribution of monies and properties of the Society. The Treasurer's responsibilities shall also include:

1. Collection of dues (Fellowship By-Laws, Chapter 1).
2. Disbursement of monies for current operating expenses. All checks shall be signed by the Treasurer and one other officer.
3. Approval of all capital expenditures. Capital expenditures shall be authorized by the Society at any formal meeting.
4. Rendering a full and complete report on the financial affairs of this Society at the Annual Business Meeting.
5. Notifying the Secretary of any member whose status is in jeopardy due to nonpayment of dues.
6. Maintaining the tax exempt status of USGNY by the timely filing of any/all government-required documents.
7. Quarterly remittance of 10% of all USGNY's qualified gross receipts to The Fellowship, accompanied by a financial report (Fellowship By-Laws Paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3).

Section 6.5. Vacancies: Whenever a vacancy shall occur in any of the foregoing offices, such vacancy shall be filled at the next formal meeting of this Society. A majority vote shall elect a successor to such office to serve the remainder of the unexpired term thereof. Nominations shall be submitted by the Governing Committee or made from the floor.

Section 6.6. Limitations: No person shall hold more than one office at a time nor shall any officer serve as chairperson of any standing committee. Officers may be members of standing committees. All terms of office shall be two (2) years. No one may hold the same office for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 6.7. Removal of an Officer:

1. An Officer may be removed from office:

(a) for permanent incapacitation rendering him/her physically or mentally unable to fulfill his/her duties as an Officer or

(b) for conduct rendering the continuation of his/her holding such office prejudicial to USGNY. Or

(c) if his or her membership status changes because he or she no longer meets the requirements of voting membership.

Whenever any voting member shall consider that an Officer should be removed for reason (a) or (b), such member may recommend to the Governing Committee, in writing, that such Officer be removed from office. Such recommendation shall specify the facts or circumstances which lead the author to conclude that the incapacitated or errant member should be removed. In the case of reason (c) the vacancy shall be reported by the Secretary at the Governing Committee meeting and the vacancy shall be filled at the next meeting as described in Section 6.5.

2. Upon receipt of written recommendation by three (3) or more voting members in good standing the Governing Committee shall call a special meeting of USGNY to adjudicate the case. During the period between such action and the time such action becomes final, the Officer in question may not sit, speak, or, vote as a member of the Governing Committee nor function in any manner as Officer of USGNY.

3. The challenged Officer shall be afforded the following rights: (1) to be notified of the recommendation, (2) to know the names of those recommending removal, (3) to be present in person and/or by counsel at all evidence-receiving sessions, (4) to present evidence, and (5) to make arguments. Notice may be in the form of a “show-cause” order enclosing a copy of all recommendations for removal of the challenged Officer, indicating the time and place of the special meeting to hear the case before the membership, and containing a statement of the rights of challenged Officer. Such notice shall be sent by registered mail to the last known address of such Officer not less than twenty-five (25) days before the hearing, or served in person not less than twenty-one (21) days before the hearing, and at the same time served to the membership by e-mail or post.

4. The removal procedure shall include the following: (1) the resolution to remove the Officer shall be read; (2) evidence shall be presented; (3) the challenged Officer may submit a statement and argument in person or by counsel; (4) the membership may request and receive such additional evidence as it desires; (5) the challenged Officer shall withdraw so that deliberations may take place; (6) a secret written ballot shall be cast (the challenged Officer disqualified from voting) “for” or “against” the resolution to remove, with an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4ths) of the voting members present (neither

proxy nor absentee ballots shall be allowed) to effect the removal from office. A lesser affirmative vote defeats the resolution, and the challenged Officer remains in office. The Governing Committee shall notify the challenged Officer of the outcome of the vote by the most expeditious means.

5. If at any time during the above proceedings the challenged Officer shall submit to the Governing Committee a written and signed letter of resignation from such office, the Governing Committee shall accept the resignation and all removal proceedings shall terminate as moot.

ARTICLE 7—GOVERNING COMMITTEE

Section 7.1. **Members:** The Governing Committee shall consist of the officers of USGNY and the chairpersons of the standing committees. The President and Secretary of USGNY shall serve as Chairperson and Secretary of the Governing Committee.

Section 7.2. **Powers and Duties:** The Governing Committee shall be vested with the power to actively manage all the affairs of USGNY in accordance with this constitution. It shall have the power, via majority vote, to veto or modify any act of any officer or of any standing committee of USGNY.

Section 7.3. **Meeting:** The Governing Committee shall meet in person at least twice annually and conduct other business as necessary. Special meetings shall be at the call of the chairperson and notice thereof shall be given at least one week prior to the meeting, stating time, place, and purpose of the meeting. A quorum of the Governing Committee consists of a majority of its members.

ARTICLE 8—STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 8.1. **Composition:** Each standing committee shall consist of at least three (3) members; a majority of members, including the chairperson must be voting members of USGNY. The President shall appoint the chairperson with the consent, via majority vote, of the Governing Committee. The chairperson, who may not be an officer, shall choose the other members. Any member of USGNY may serve on any number of committees, but no one may be chairperson of more than one committee simultaneously. Each chairperson's term of office shall be two (2) years, and s/he may succeed her/himself only once. Committee chairperson terms shall expire in non-election (for officers) years.

Section 8.2. **Quorum of Standing Committees:** A quorum of any standing committee shall consist of a simple majority of its members.

Section 8.3. Membership/Hospitality Committee: The Membership/Hospitality Committee shall:

1. Pass upon the eligibility and qualification of each candidate for membership in USGNY;
2. Conduct the initiation ceremony for new members in accordance with requirements of the Charter Committee of The Fellowship;
3. Working in conjunction with the Program Committee, this committee will be responsible for supervising children, providing food and beverages, and cleaning up at all USGNY meetings; and,
4. The Membership Committee Chairperson shall maintain an updated contact list of all Society members and other associated persons.

Section 8.4. Program Committee: The Program Committee shall plan and implement programs for Society meetings consistent with the purposes of this Society (Article 2).

Section 8.5. Outreach Committee: The Outreach Committee shall plan and implement outreach programs for the society consistent with the purposes of this Society (Article 2).

Section 8.6. Ad Hoc Committees: The President shall determine the need for ad hoc committees and shall appoint chairs for such committees for the execution of special projects. The chair of each committee shall select the members of the committee.”

Section 8.7. Additional Standing Committees: If deemed expedient, the Society may establish additional standing committees.

Section 8.8. Removal of a Standing Committee Chairperson: Reasons for removal are stated in “Removal of an Officer.” A Standing Committee Chairperson may be removed from office at the request of the President with the approval of a majority of all Governing Committee members, excepting the Chairperson in question. Additionally, any member of USGNY has the right to make written petition by e-mail or post to the President for the Removal of a Standing Committee Chairperson. Upon receipt of three (3) or more such petitions, the President is required to bring the matter before the Governing Committee.

ARTICLE 9—QUALIFICATION FOR TAX EXEMPT STATUS AND DISSOLUTION

Section 9.1. USGNY is organized exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 9.2. No part of the net earnings of USGNY shall inure to the benefit of or be distributed to its members or any private individual. No substantial part of the activities of USGNY shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. USGNY shall not

carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 9.3. Upon dissolution of USGNY, all of the assets of USGNY shall be distributed to the successor organization of the Society, if such organization qualifies under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. If there be no successor to USGNY, then all of its assets shall be distributed to The Fellowship Corporation or, exclusively for the purposes of USGNY, to an organization(s) organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes as shall qualify for exemption under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or to the Federal government, or to a state or local government for a public purpose.

ARTICLE 10—AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourths, and By-Laws may be amended by majority vote, at any formal meeting provided that all voting members have been sent a copy of the proposed amendment(s) at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting. Absentee ballots shall not be eligible for such votes.

ARTICLE 11—PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised shall be the parliamentary authority in all matters not specified in this constitution.

BY-LAWS

CHAPTER 1—DUES COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The Secretary of USGNY shall send out dues announcements by e-mail or post to the entire Society membership by December 15 of each year stating that the dues are to be paid to the Treasurer by March 31 of the following year. Members who have difficulty meeting the dues requirement may submit a request for an exemption to the President or Treasurer by March 1. The President or Treasurer shall submit the request to the Governing Committee, which may approve the request by majority vote. The Treasurer shall send out a reminder on March 1, indicating the necessity of paying dues to maintain voting membership status. By April 30, the Treasurer shall turn over to the Secretary the names of the voting members who have not paid their dues. Such members shall then be placed in the non-voting category and notified of such in writing by e-mail or post by the Secretary.

CHAPTER 2—OFFICERS' INITIAL TERMS

A complete slate of officers and committee chairpersons shall be elected at the May 31, 1987 meeting of prospective Founding and Charter Members of SGNY1. The initial term of office for committee chairpersons shall be one (1) year. The initial terms of office for officers shall be the regular two (2) years.

CHAPTER 3—MEETINGS

A meeting in the context of this constitution is defined as a gathering of society members for a specific purpose(s) and may be either: an in-person meeting; an online meeting; or a combination of both. In all cases, the meeting process will be conducted in accordance with the applicable process(es) defined in the then current version of Robert's Rules of Order.

CHAPTER 4—CONTACT LISTS

The Secretary shall maintain lists of: (1) all society members and (2) associated parties. These lists should include, where authorized by the individuals, their: email address, home address, and telephone number(s). The society members list shall also include the current voting status of the member based on the criteria in section 4.7 Membership Status, in the underlying constitution.