

RISE: Working Group on Race, Inequality, Solidarity and Economics

ARTICLE I – Name & Purpose

Section 1. Name

The name of this student organization shall be interchangeable between “RISE: Working Group on Race, Inequality, Solidarity and Economics;” or, for short, RISE, which will be used for the purposes of this document.

Section 2. Mission/Purpose Statement

The mission of RISE is to create a safe environment for students to engage, in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity, in co-learning, discussions and activities towards solutions to diverse problems of social inequality, such as wealth and income inequality, poverty and racial, gender and economic disparities.

Section 3. Objectives and Activities

RISE shall seek to achieve its mission through different activities and methods, including the following:

- Create regular programming, publications, forums and other events that enable students to gain and share knowledge about topics such as race, gender, wealth and income inequality, as well as alternative approaches to equitable growth.
- Prioritize the study of stratification and inequality and advocate for the inclusion of subjects related to income disparity, poverty, racial divides and other forms of inequality in public policy curriculum.
- Foster community and enhance advocacy and organizational efforts for social, economic and racial justice, by providing support to other student groups and community members on activities with intersecting interests
- Create a sense of active civic and political engagement by seeking volunteer and political action opportunities within our immediate communities.

Overall, bring together students, scholars and activists who are researching and working on these important topics, including those at SIPA, across Columbia, and across New York City and beyond.

Section 4. Compliance

RISE operates at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University, subject to Columbia University policies and procedures.

ARTICLE II - Membership

Section 1. Membership in RISE is open to students enrolled at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs, subject to membership requirements outlined in SIPA’s student group policies.

Section 2. RISE is committed to following and upholding the Columbia University’s Non-Discrimination Statement and Policy, as described at: <http://eoaa.columbia.edu/columbia-university-non-discrimination-statement-and-policy>

Section 3. The types of membership that exist in RISE are as follows:

1. General Members: A general member is defined as any student who signs up for the student group mailing list through OrgSync or other recruitment events, or anyone who attends and participates in RISE activities and events.
2. Steering Committee Member: A Steering Committee member is defined as any member who is selected to an executive position or who is appointed to temporarily assume the duties of a vacant executive position. Steering Committee Members direct the week to week activities of RISE, help to envision possible activities and priorities each semester, and overall work to ensure RISE continues to function in accordance with its mission and goals.

Section 4. RISE will not charge dues for membership status.

ARTICLE III – Elections

Section 1: Eligibility

SIPA students who are RISE members and are in good academic standing may be eligible to be Steering Committee Members.

Section 2: Election Procedures and Supervision:

- a. Elections will be held annually in the Fall term.
- b. Elections will be monitored by the Steering Committee. If a Steering Committee member is eligible and plans to run as a candidate, she or he will not participate in the election supervision. The Steering Committee will provide candidates and voting members with information on the elections, campaigning and all associated procedures.
- c. General Members will declare their candidacy by submitting an application to the Steering Committee. Applications and criteria will be determined by the outgoing board. Applicants will be informed of the board's decisions within two weeks following their interviews.
- d. The Board will judge applicants based on: their commitment to the Group's mission and objectives; the relevance of candidates' prior working, leadership and service experiences; important considerations of diversity, equity and representation; and other factors as determined by the outgoing Steering Committee.

Section 3: Election Appeals and By-Elections:

- a. A candidate or general member may appeal election results within one week of the Steering Committee announcing them. The appeal must be sent in writing, by email, to all Steering Committee members.
- b. Should a Steering Committee position not be filled, the Steering Committee will appoint a member to that position through a consensus decision-making process.
- c. Should a Steering Committee position become vacant partway through the year, the Steering Committee will open applications to fill that position, and will maintain the ability to appoint a general member to such open positions, through consensus decision-making.

ARTICLE IV – Steering Committee

Section 1. Steering Committee Composition and Roles:

The Steering Committee shall be a collaborative working body, composed of the following positions and committee-based work-areas:

- Steering Committee Coordinator(s)
- Treasurer
- General Secretary
- Education and Curriculum Chair
- Communications Chair
- Community Engagement and Activism Chair
- Events and Programming Chair
- General Steering Committee Members

At all times, RISE shall have at least the Coordinator, General Secretary and Treasurer positions filled. Alternately, if there are Co-Coordinators in a given year, at minimum, the GROUP shall maintain at least two Co-Coordinators and the Treasurer position. In either of the above scenarios, additionally, RISE shall have at least two more Steering Committee members, either as General Steering Committee Members or in one of the specialized positions as described below.

Section 2. Terms of Office

Steering Committee members will serve from the start of the Spring Semester until the end of the Fall semester. Steering Committee members shall meet with the newly elected Board at the end of the Fall semester and actively support the leadership transition and pass on all available institutional knowledge.

Section 3: Removal and Impeachment from Steering Committee:

- a. Members in bad standing will be removed from the Steering Committee in compliance with SIPA and SIPASA related regulations.
- b. If a Steering Committee member fails to fulfill the duties of their position or uphold the mission and objectives of the organization, the General Membership or Steering Committee may petition for their removal.

Section 4. Duties of Officers

Possible Steering Committee positions and their associated responsibilities and activities may include the following:

a. Steering Committee Coordinator(s)

The Coordinator is responsible for setting the strategic direction for RISE. The Coordinator acts as the main point of contact for all external organizations, possesses signing authority on the Group expenses, leads RISE in recruiting student members, chairs regular meetings, and is the primary media contact. The Coordinator is the primary liaison with the Faculty Advisor. The Coordinator is responsible for delivering the SIPASA Budget Presentation with the support of the Treasurer. The Coordinator oversees and supports the roles of the other Steering Committee members and respective committees. The Coordinator is also responsible for building and tracking RISE's membership and network.

b. Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the finances of RISE. Together with the Coordinator, the Treasurer must approve all Group expenses. The Treasurer is the primary liaison with the Business Manager within the SIPA Business Office. The Treasurer keeps a record of the Group's finances and provides reports to the Steering Committee on expenses and available funding periodically and prior to all events. Finally, the Treasurer supports the Steering Committee Coordinator with the SIPASA Budget Presentation at the beginning of each semester by creating the presentation and attending the presentation.

c. General Secretary

The General Secretary manages important organizational aspects of RISE's work, including maintaining internal board communication, coordinating meeting logistics, and scheduling and securing rooms for board and general body meetings. The General Secretary will also assist the Steering Committee with ensuring that there is a note-taker during meetings, either by taking notes or creating an alternating schedule of minutes-recording. Also assists the working group with institutional knowledge management, including maintaining information on Google Drive and other databases.

d. General Steering Committee Member

In the interest of egalitarian democracy, the Steering Committee shall function as non-hierarchically and collaboratively as possible. As such, while specialized Steering Committee positions may be filled by members whose interests and skills align with those specific positions, RISE leaves the option open for Steering Committee members to be "General Steering Committee Members" and to help fulfill the mission and goals of RISE through that flexible role.

e. Community/ Civic Engagement and Activism Chair

The Community/Civic Engagement and Activism Chair is a Steering Committee position concerned with membership engagement, recruitment, mobilization and leadership development. This position should support the Steering Committee and General membership with engaging SIPA students in RISE sponsored activities as well as in volunteer, civic engagement and political action and activism opportunities at Columbia and in the broader communities. Along with the Coordinator(s) and Steering Committee, the Community Engagement and Activism Chair helps RISE connect with organizations, scholars and leaders in the broader New York City community, help build and maintain relationships with such organizations.

f. Education and Curriculum Chair

The Education and Curriculum Chair is RISE's primary Steering Committee Member on issues of education and curriculum around problems of and alternatives to inequality, disparities and injustice. Works with the General Membership and the Steering Committee to encourage SIPA and Columbia to increase its capacity to research, teach and intervene on these vital topics. Regularly keep tabs on similar organizations and institutions for inspiration, including those at fellow universities and institutions, such as Harvard, UC Berkeley, Georgetown and Stanford, amongst others. The Education and Curriculum Chair will also help to spearhead RISE's efforts and initiatives around creating scholarship and interdisciplinary collaborations, such as researching and publishing pieces in related journalism venues or academic journals.

Along with Communications Chair and the Events and Programming Chair, the Education and Curriculum Chair may also help to publicize ongoing events at SIPA, Columbia, in NYC or nationally, and organize RISE group member trips to such events.

g. Communications Chair

The Communications Chair is responsible for promoting and advertising meetings, events and other activities put on by RISE. Responsibilities include: managing membership and email lists; leading outreach to increase working group membership and increase participation and engagement; managing and updating social media accounts; creating marketing and public awareness-increasing materials for recruitment, events and awareness-raising; create and maintain a database and list of related resources, news-sites, academic institutions, etc; and other communications related duties in collaboration with the Coordinator and the Steering Committee.

Along with the Education and Curriculum Chair, the Events and Programming Chair, and the Community Engagement and Activism Chair, the Communications Chair may also help to publicize related ongoing events at SIPA, Columbia, in NYC or nationally, and organize RISE group member trips to such events.

h. Events and Programming Chair

The Events and Programming Chair is responsible for planning events that support the mission of the group. Specifically, and in collaboration with the Steering Committee, the Events and Programming chair shall be responsible for ensuring RISE holds regular programming and events for SIPA students, the Columbia campus and the broader NYC and public affairs communities. These events may include the following: dialogues; forums; academic and expert panels; conferences; RISE group meetings; and others.

The Events and Programming Chair will be responsible for logistics around meetings and events, including room reservations, materials, securing speakers and coordinating with food/drink vendors. Along with the Steering Committee, should keep up-to-date with ongoing events and politics in the US and beyond, for possible relevant topics to highlight and create interventions on through RISE's programming and events.

Along with the Education and Curriculum Chair and the Communications Chair, the Events and Programming Chair may also help to publicize ongoing events at SIPA, Columbia, in NYC or nationally, and organize RISE group member trips to such events.

ARTICLE V - Meetings and Procedures

Section 1. General Meetings

RISE will hold at least one general meeting each semester, open to all members of the group. These meetings should happen ordinarily within the first four weeks of each semester, or no later than the sixth week of a given semester. Besides other outreach methods, members will be notified in writing of the event, including through the mailing list and/or Orgsync.

Section 2. Steering Committee Meetings

Steering Committee meetings will be held regularly--and no less than monthly--throughout the course of the school year.

Section 3. Quorum

Quorum for Steering Committee meetings shall be set at more than half of the Steering Committee.

ARTICLE VI - Finances

Section 1. Fiscal Timeline

The Group's fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31, but budget allocations shall be subject to SIPASA's budget allocation process.

Section 2. Budgets

In collaboration with the Coordinator(s), the Treasure is responsible for creating and presenting the upcoming budgets each semester.

Section 3. Expenses and Reimbursements

- a. The Steering Committee Coordinator(s) and Treasurer must approve all expenses under RISE's name prior to any funds changing hands.
- b. Steering Committee members may be reimbursed for approved expenses according to the policies and procedures stipulated by SIPA.

ARTICLE VII - Amendments to the Constitution

Section 1:

The Steering Committee shall have the authority to amend the Constitution on a semesterly-basis. All amendments or changes to the constitution shall be accompanied by the following procedures:

- Notification of such changes in writing to the general membership.
- Notification of changes to the Faculty Advisor.
- Recording of changes to the constitution in a maintained Working Group Archive, and the recording of previous versions of the constitution in said Archive.

ARTICLE VIII - Ratification

This constitution was a collaborative document drafted in December 2017 and January 2018, based on discussions and brainstorming that took place during this time, including in two founding meetings in December 2017.

The Founding Members of the RISE Working Group are:

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