

# **The Constitution of The Native and Indigenous Relations Community at UVA**

October 2025

## **Article I: Name and object**

1. The name of this organization shall be The Native and Indigenous Relations Community at UVA (NIRC)
2. NIRC understands and will adhere to university policies and guidelines. We align with established definitions and policies for conduct and prohibited behaviors:
  - a. HRM-009 Preventing and Addressing Discrimination and Harassment (PADH)
  - b. HRM-041 Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence
  - c. HRM-010 Preventing and Addressing Retaliation (PAR)
  - d. HRM-014 Code of Conduct for University Staff Employees
  - e. Mission University Code of Ethics for Faculty and Staff
  - f. Respect@UVA includes a list of disrespectful behaviors, including bullying or ridicule used as an attack on others.
  - g. UVA Wise Community Standards

## **Article II: Purpose**

1. The Native and Indigenous Relations Community at UVA (NIRC) is established for the express purpose of:
  - a. Convening a community engaged in scholarship, events, and other activities that highlight the perspectives, history, and well-being of Native and Indigenous peoples, thereby enriching the diversity of the University community.
  - b. Providing opportunities to share scholarship, activities, and projects relevant to the organization.
  - c. Collaborating respectfully across UVA's academic departments and units and with Native Nations, to support activities of UVA's Tribal Liaison.

## **Article III: Membership**

1. Membership is open to all those affiliated with the University of Virginia in an official capacity (i.e. students, faculty, staff, alumni) and members of the broader community working on related initiatives. All members are welcome to attend general meetings and events and be part of our listserv.
2. Those who regularly attend events and meetings (an expectation of a minimum of three events per academic year) and participate in the organization's listserv will be considered active members should a general membership vote be required.

- a. If a member fails to satisfy participatory requirements, that member will remain active at the discretion of the Steering Committee (article IV) (by a two-third vote); the member must provide reasonable explanation for failing to satisfy the requirements.
3. The Native and Indigenous Relations Community at UVA does not restrict its membership, programs, or activities on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity, marital status, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, veteran status, and family and genetic information.
4. Note: There are no dues/fees associated with being a member of The Native and Indigenous Relations Community at UVA.

#### **Article IV: Steering Committee**

1. Any active NIRC member can become a member of the Steering Committee. Members will self-nominate at the conclusion of the academic year and current Steering Committee members will determine the next academic year's composition. The Steering Committee will operate collectively without designated officer roles. Any decisions made by the Steering Committee will be based on a two-thirds vote.
2. When possible, the Steering Committee should be comprised of at least: one student/member of the Native American Student Union, one faculty member, one community member and one staff member and someone available to convene regular meetings. In extenuating circumstances, Steering Committee membership may be restructured at times and in ways not outlined in the Constitution to best meet the needs of the group.
3. All Steering Committee members are subject to the same code of conduct as all NIRC members. Any member in violation of the organization's purpose or constitution may be removed from committee/group membership as outlined in the by-law process below.
4. The Steering Committee maintains the membership list.

#### **Article V: Meetings**

1. General group meetings will occur at least twice a semester, but meetings may occur more frequently depending on member interest and on what the Steering Committee deems necessary.
2. The Steering Committee may hold additional meetings to conduct business.

#### **Article VI: Finance**

1. We do not collect dues.
2. If funding is received, all funds will be handled by the Steering Committee and be used to facilitate open events in support of NIRC priorities.

## **Article VII: By-laws**

1. By-laws will be created to dictate the structure and procedures of the organization. By-laws may be proposed by any active member and must obtain a majority vote of the active membership. No by-law shall infringe on the authority of the constitution.
2. Code of conduct: As NIRC is an official UVA committee, all NIRC members must uphold the UVA Human Resources Standards of Conduct for University Staff Employees and the University Code of Ethics for Faculty and Staff.
3. If any member fails to abide by NIRC's tenets of inclusive respect; creates an uncomfortable, unsafe, and/or unfriendly environment for a fellow member; or otherwise disrupts NIRC's activities, they will be subject to review by the NIRC Steering Committee for counseling and/or membership termination.
  - a. Review proceedings begin when the Steering Committee receives a written request from at least three members.
  - b. If the Steering Committee holds a vote on membership termination, that vote shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of the Steering Committee.
4. No communication, public or private, that purports to be representing NIRC shall be made without prior approval by a majority vote of the Steering Committee.

## **Article VIII. Committees**

1. As needed, subcommittees will be created to support ad hoc and standing initiatives. Committees will be governed by by-laws and shall not have authority over the Steering Committee or general body.
2. Any active member (including members of the Steering Committee) may serve as a committee convener. Conveners will be appointed by the Steering Committee and will coordinate the planning and execution of the committee project.

## **Article IX. Amendments**

1. The constitution is binding to all members of the Native and Indigenous Relations Community of UVA, but the constitution is not binding unto itself. Amendments to the constitution may be proposed in writing by any active member of the group to the Steering Committee, which will discuss proposed amendments at a following full-body meeting.
2. Proposed amendments will be effective following approval of two-thirds majority vote of Steering Committee members.
3. When needed, NIRC will use Robert's Rules of Order.