Constitution of the Perkins Student Association

We, the students of the SMU Perkins School of Theology, do hereby establish a Student Association to:

- be a voice for the student body to the school administration;
- administer the finances allocated to the school from the student service fees received from the University;
- administer and raise money for the Perkins Emergency Relief Fund (PERF);
- encourage and promote active individual involvement in the life of the community;
- act as a medium for the exchange of ideas and the involvement in relevant concerns within the Perkins, Dallas, and global communities.

ARTICLE I Membership

Section A The Student Association. The members of the Perkins Student Association shall consist of all students officially enrolled in Perkins School of Theology of Southern Methodist University. All Ph.D. students in the Graduate Program in Religious Studies are to be included as authorized members of the Student Association.

Section B The leadership of the Student Association shall be the Perkins Student Association Council which includes the following:

1. Executive officers (refer to Article II, Sec. A);
2. Representatives of Organized Interest Groups (refer to Article VII Sec. C);
3. First, Middle, and Last Year Representative officers elected from the respective members of each academic class as determined by academic hours (refer to Article IV, Sec. A.2);
4. Student Senators as allocated by the SMU Student Senate who shall represent the Student Association on the Senate and report the activities of the SMU Student Senate to the Student Association;
5. A maximum of six seats to be designated to other groups (i.e. ethnic, gender, MSM, CMM, MTS, Ph.D.) as deemed appropriate by 2/3 vote of the PSA Council; and
6. One representative for the Houston-Galveston extension program who shall represent concerns of the students to the PSA Council.

Section C Term Length. All terms expire on the last day of finals of the Spring semester. Newly elected or appointed positions take office that same day.

ARTICLE II Executive Functions of the PSA

Section A The Executive Officers of the PSA shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Justice in Action Life Chair, and Justice in Action Chair.

Section B: Officers

1. President
   a. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the PSA and responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization;
   b. The President shall preside over the Council as Chair and shall have the power to call meetings of the Council outside of its regularly scheduled meetings.
   b. For additional responsibilities and qualifications, see the By-laws.

2. Vice-President
   a. Shall fill the remaining term of President, should the Presidency become vacant for any reason;
   b. Shall be responsible for administering elections of the Association;
   c. Shall be responsible for issues relating to the sale of PSA merchandise; and,
   d. For additional responsibilities and qualifications, see the by-laws.

3. Secretary
   a. The Secretary shall be the chief administrative officer of the PSA and responsible for the maintenance of the minutes and communication aspects of the organization; and
   b. For additional responsibilities and qualifications, see the By-laws.

4. Treasurer
   a. The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the PSA and responsible for the presentation and maintenance of the budget, oversee the financial accounts of the organization and its transactions; and
   b. For additional responsibilities and qualifications, see the By-laws.

5. Justice in Action Chair
   a. The Justice in Action Chair shall preside over meetings of the Justice in Action Committee;
   b. The Chair shall report to the PSA Council regarding the activities of the Justice in Action committee;
   c. For additional responsibilities and qualifications, see the By-laws.

6. Justice in Action Life Chair
   a. The Justice in Action Life Chair shall preside over meetings of the Justice in Action Committee;
   b. The Chair shall report to the PSA Council regarding the activities of the Justice in Action committee;
   c. For additional responsibilities and qualifications, see the By-laws.

Section C Executive Council

1. The Executive Council shall be composed of the officers listed in Article II, Section A.
2. The Executive Council shall meet at least once between General Council meetings in order to discuss the state of affairs and prepare for the upcoming General Council meeting.
3. The President will chair meetings of the Executive Council and may call meetings of the Executive Council as needed.
4. A majority of the Executive Council is needed to be present for a quorum.
5. The outgoing Executive Council must conduct an orientation for the newly elected Executive Council, which shall include a briefing as to all responsibilities of the office as well as turning over the files of the PSA.
6. During the Summer, the Executive Council as well as any members of the PSA Council present during the summer shall function and have the authority of the full council during the summer terms. For these meetings, a majority of the Executive Council shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE III - Legislative and Judicial Functions of the PSA Council

Section A Legislative Function of the PSA Council

The primary responsibility of the PSA Council shall be to serve as the representative voice of the Student Body of the SMU Perkins School of Theology on all areas of concern to the Perkins Community. To achieve this function, the Council may approve by majority vote resolutions submitted in writing to the PSA President by any member of the Association addressing any area of student concern and calling for action from the appropriately responsible persons or entities. The PSA Council acting in its legislative capacity may also adopt By-laws to provide for additional structure and functionality of the PSA.

Section B Judiciary Function of the PSA Council

1. The PSA Council shall also serve as the judicial branch of the PSA. The PSA Council shall be responsible by majority vote of those present to finally resolve matters of constitutional interpretation as presented in writing to the PSA President by any member of the PSA. It shall also be responsible to resolve by majority vote of those present any disagreements presented in writing to the PSA President by Organized Interest Groups organized by the PSA. The PSA Council may also be called into emergency session to resolve election disputes as provided by the PSA By-laws. The PSA Council shall also decide all issues of impeachment as detailed in Article VI of this Constitution. The PSA President shall preside over the Council while in judicial session unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case the Vice-President shall preside. In the case both President and Vice-President possess a conflict the Council shall appoint a temporary chair by majority vote.

2. All judicial decisions shall be considered final and binding in so far as they do not conflict with the Constitution of the University student government or University policies in general.

Section C Procedures of the PSA Council in Exercising its Legislative and Judicial Functions

A quorum of the PSA Council shall be constituted by a majority of its members as listed in Article I, Section B. Unless otherwise provided by this Constitution or the PSA By-laws, all legislative actions and judicial decisions of the PSA Council shall be decided by a majority of the PSA Council members listed in Article I, Section B present and voting. The Council shall determine at its first meeting each semester the dates and times of its meetings during months for which there are classes at the Dallas campus. The President when presiding or any other member presiding shall only vote in case of a tie. The agenda for any PSA Council meeting shall be set by the President and shall consist of at least any item submitted in writing to the President as well as any other item deemed appropriate by the President in consultation with the Executive Council. The agenda of a PSA Council meeting must be distributed by the Secretary no later than 24 hours prior to a PSA Council meeting.

Article IV Elections

Section A Qualifications

1. Any person may be a candidate for office under this Constitution if that person:
   a. Is a master's level student within Perkins School of Theology;
   b. Has attained a cumulative average not lower than that required for graduation; OR: be an entering student who has satisfied in full the entrance requirements of the University and the School without restriction; and
   c. Is enrolled for at least a minimum of six credit hours in the Fall and Spring semesters.

2. Middle and Last Year representatives must possess the appropriate number of hours according to their degree program upon successful completion of the Spring semester during which they seek election. A First year representative must be a student enrolling at Perkins for the first time in the Fall semester. Only students who are members of the respective year of their degree program shall vote for the respective First, Middle, and Last Year representative as appropriate based upon their enrollment status for the upcoming Fall semester.

Section B Time for General Elections

Elections for President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Justice in Action Chair, Social Life Chair, Middle and Last Year Representatives, and Student Senators shall be held in the Spring semester prior to the last meeting of the then-sitting PSA Council's term of office. Elections for First Year Representatives and the Houston-Galveston Extension Representative will occur no later than 3 weeks after the first day of classes in the Fall.

Section C Election Procedure

1. This Constitution and any election regulations adopted by the Council as part of its By-laws shall govern all aspects of elections under the auspices of the PSA.

2. All Elections shall be administered by the Election Commission. The Election Commission must be chaired by the Vice President and shall include 2 other representatives appointed by the President with the confirmation of a majority vote of the PSA Council. Should a Commissioner decide to run for office in an election, that Commissioner, including the Vice President, shall relinquish his/her position as Election Commissioner. The Vice President is not required to resign from office. The vacant Commissioner or the chairperson position shall be filled as soon as possible by the President with the confirmation of the PSA Council at its next meeting. If no meeting is scheduled before an election or called by the President, the President's interim appointment may serve as Commissioner and assist fully in the administration of an election. If the Vice President is required to relinquish his/her position as chair of the Commission, the President is required to call a meeting of the PSA Council to confirm the appointment of a new Chair of the Election Commission. The Election Commission no later than a week before nominations begin shall develop and distribute to the Perkins student body a list of the offices available for election, the requirements and job responsibilities of each position, and provide all rules and regulations governing candidates' and supporters' conduct during elections administered by the PSA. All members of the Commission shall serve as election judges and have responsibility for enforcing the Constitution's provisions regarding elections and any election regulations adopted by the PSA Council. The Chair of the Election Commission shall have primary responsibility working with the Commission to develop a ballot for elections administered by the PSA.

3. The Election Commission shall accept nominations from members of the PSA as defined in Article I, Section A for at least a week prior to the election. The election commission may take up to a week from the close of nominations to collect Declarations of Candidacy from nominees in a form approved by the Commission that includes at least the biographical and platform information from the candidates. This biographical and platform information should be distributed to all students eligible to vote at least 3 days before the election begins. Candidates are free to campaign personally with students so long as such campaigning complies with any election regulations adopted by the PSA Council. Candidates for any Student Senator positions to which Perkins is entitled shall be governed by these regulations and any additional, non-conflicting requirements adopted by the Student Senate.

4. All elections shall be by secret ballot with each member of the Association entitled to only one vote. The Election Commission possesses the sole discretion to conduct elections entirely by electronic means or through written ballot. Write-in votes shall be allowed except in run-off elections. Valid SMU Student Identification should be required to vote. Students should only cast votes for the representative officers assigned to their academic status for the next academic year.

5. Violations of the Constitution or Election Regulations should be referred in writing to the Election Commission. The Election Commission must hold a hearing and issue a ruling on every

reported alleged violation no later than 48 hours after the allegations receipt in writing. Appeals of any decision of the Election Commission shall be heard by the PSA Council no later than 48 hours after the Election Commission's decision.

6. In elections for a single position, a majority of the votes cast is required for election. In the case that no one receives a majority, the two candidates with the most votes shall participate in a run-off election. The run-off election shall be conducted over a 3 day period no sooner than 4 days after the conclusion of the primary election and no later than 1 week after the conclusion of the primary election.

7. In elections for positions held by multiple persons (Class representatives, Student Senators, etc.), the candidates who receive the most votes are elected. No run-off elections shall be held without an order of the PSA Council for positions held by multiple persons.

8. The Election Commission shall count the ballots and announce the election results within 24 hours after the election concludes. The Election Commission shall contact all candidates and personally notify them of the results prior to publishing the results to the entire Perkins community.

Section D Filling Vacancies

1. If any elected member of the Council is unable to fill their term of office for any reason including excessive absences, the Council shall order a special election for his/her position if the vacancy occurs before the Fall election.

2. If the vacancy occurs following the Fall election, the Executive Council, after considering applications for the vacancy, shall nominate a replacement to the PSA Council to fill the vacancy. The nominee shall be confirmed upon 2/3 vote of the PSA Council. If the nominee fails to garner 2/3 of the vote of the PSA Council present and voting, the Executive Council shall propose another replacement until a nominee secures a 2/3 vote confirming them by the PSA Council.

Article V PSA Committees

Section A The PSA shall have at least 2 standing committees, the Social Life Committee and Justice in Action Committee. All members of the Association as defined in Article I, Section A may serve on any standing committee of the PSA. The PSA Council may also create ad hoc committees to address specific issues of concern to the Perkins community.

Section B The Social Life Committee shall be chaired by the Social Life Chairperson. The Social Life Committee shall be comprised of at least 1 representative officer from each academic class as well as any other members of the Association desiring to serve on the committee. The Social Life Committee shall coordinate and fund, both individually as well as through co-programming with other student groups, activities that:

1. Nurture the community and encourage fellowship amongst members of the Perkins community;

2. Provide for the holistic well-being of the Perkins Community; and
3. Assist with the welcoming of International Students into the Perkins Community.

Section C The Justice in Action Committee shall be chaired by the Justice in Action Chairperson. The Justice in Action Committee shall be comprised of at least 1 representative officer from each academic class as well as any other members of the Association desiring to serve on the committee. The Justice in Action Committee shall coordinate and fund, both individually as well as through co-programming with other student groups, activities that:

1. Raise awareness and educate the Perkins community about social issues including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and environmental responsibility;
2. Participate in established community programs or events that seek to bring about a more just society;
3. Seek to change unjust social and systemic structures locally, nationally, and global;
4. Enable theological reflection on an experience such that students may make connections between personal piety and social holiness in such a way that challenges them to integrate this into their academic work; and
5. Advertise events, programs, educational sessions, or opportunities to the Perkins community.

Section D The creation of ad hoc committees shall be approved by a majority of the PSA Council. The Chairperson and members of an ad hoc committee shall be appointed by the President and confirmed by majority vote of the PSA Council. Members of ad hoc committees who are not members of the PSA Council as defined by Article I, Section B shall not be entitled to vote at PSA Council meetings. Ad Hoc committees should give committee reports at each regularly scheduled council meeting during the committee's course of existence. Ad Hoc committees shall be disbanded upon acceptance of any final report or final recommendation to the PSA Council or upon disbandment by the PSA Council at any time by majority vote.

Article VI Impeachment

Section A A member of the PSA Council, a PSA executive officer, a chair or member of any ad hoc committee shall only be impeached for failure to perform their duties or for any other reasons specifically stated in writing in the By-laws of the PSA. To initiate an impeachment proceeding, any member of the Association may file articles of impeachment specifically stating the failures of the person to perform their duties. The articles of impeachment must be signed by 20% of the Association. If the charges contained in the articles fail to allege specific failures to perform duties, the PSA Executive Council may upon majority vote require the articles of impeachment be re-submitted with additional specific facts detailing how the alleged person failed to perform their office. The Executive Council shall appoint a member of the Association who is not a PSA Council member to investigate the charges and report their findings to the Council at either the next regularly scheduled PSA meeting or at a specially called meeting for such purpose. Following the articles presentation and the presentation of a defense by the office holder, the PSA may impeach the office holder upon a ¾ vote of the PSA Council.

Section B A member of the PSA Council is automatically removed from office upon her/his second absence not approved by the Executive Council. No articles of impeachment are

necessary. The Secretary of the PSA shall announce the vacancy before the next PSA Council meeting. The vacancy will be filled during the President's report at the following PSA Council meeting according to Article IV, Section D.

Article VII Organized Interest Groups (OIG)

Section A Definition

OIGs are groups of Association members with similar interests who have requested to be formally organized within the Perkins community to deepen the quality of academic, spiritual and social life outside the classroom.

Section B Approval Process

An interest group shall be approved as an OIG when the PSA Council approves their formal organization and initial constitution by a 2/3 majority vote. To qualify for organization, an OIG must:

1. Fulfill a function which the PSA Council in its discretion considers vital to the Association's common life;
2. Possesses a constitution providing for accountability to its members and to the PSA Council and Perkins community that is also on file with the Secretary and approved by the Council. The Constitution shall provide at least the following:
   a. A name and set of general purposes;
   b. Guarantees for acceptable democratic procedures in all of the OIG's operations;
   c. Reasonable requirements for interest group membership; and,
   d. A description of the organizations structure, including a chairperson, however titled, a treasurer, a representative to the PSA Council that may be the President or Treasurer, and any additional officers deemed necessary for the proper functioning of the OIG.

Section C A voting representative of the OIG shall be required to attend all meetings of the PSA Council. In the event of non-attendance by an OIG representative, the Executive Council can take appropriate punitive action including, but not limited to, withholding of budgeted funds.

Section D Each OIG shall have the right to amend its Constitution at any time, provided any amendments are approved both by the majority of the OIG's membership and a majority of the PSA Council.

Section E An OIG has the right to investigate any issue, formulate a policy statement, and take action on any issue which falls under its jurisdiction as stated in its Constitution. However, actions taken by the OIG cannot purport to be taken on behalf of or representative of the PSA, Perkins, or SMU. OIGs may report their findings to the PSA Council and move for the adoption of specific policy statements or actions to be taken by the PSA Council as representative of Perkins students pursuant to the PSA Council's legislative function.

Section F Every Association member has the right to apply for and be considered for membership on any OIG. Any member of the Association refused membership in an OIG may appeal such decision to the PSA Council acting in its judicial function. The Council shall determine whether such refusal of membership was not in accordance with stated membership qualifications found in the OIG's approved constitution. All members of the Association may remain members of the OIG for as long as they continue to meet the membership requirements of the OIG's approved constitution.

Section G All members of the Association have the right to attend all meetings of all OIGs.

Article VIII Budget & Finances

Section A The sources of income for the Association shall be:

1. Allocations of the general student service fee provided by SAMSA;
2. Appropriations from the SMU Student Senate and/or SMU Graduate Council;
3. Other funds secured through the budget of the Perkins School of Theology;
4. Other funds secured from outside sources to support the PSA and its OIGs; and
5. Self-imposed fees.

Section B Self-imposed fees may be levied by the Council through a student referendum. The Council upon a 2/3 vote may submit for referendum the proposed fee and must also provide a justification for the fee, including the proposed fee's intended use and how such usage betters the Perkins community. The referendum shall be administered by the Election Commission during the next regularly scheduled election. Upon approval of 2/3 of the members of the Association voting in the referendum, the PSA President shall forward the referendum to the Dean of the Perkins School of Theology and work to enforce the collection of the fee by the Perkins administration. No self-imposed fee may be levied in excess of 10% per semester of the total of the general student activity fee.

Section C All OIGs shall submit to the Treasurer their budget request for the upcoming academic year no later than the last regularly scheduled PSA Council meeting. The outgoing Executive Council shall prepare a spreadsheet detailing the total of each OIG's request to date and the amount budgeted and actually spent during the academic year to date at the time the outgoing executive officers' terms of office expire.

Section D The incoming Executive Council shall propose a budget for the PSA that may be accepted by the Summer PSA Council pursuant to Article II, Section C.6. The budget must be approved prior to new student orientation to allow OIGs and PSA to provide programming at the start of the Fall semester.

Section E The incoming Executive Council may amend the PSA's spending guidelines and restrictions by majority vote. Any amendments to the PSA spending guidelines and restrictions must occur prior to new student orientation to allow OIGs to adequately prepare for Fall activities.

Section F There shall be a fund administered by the Council called the Perkins Emergency Relief Fund (PERF).

1. The fund will serve as a relief assistance for students and other members of the Perkins community.
2. Sources for the fund come from donations and PSA Council's Budget and any fundraising activities.
3. The contact people for the fund are the President and Vice President. They confer with each other and confidentially handle all requests.
4. The President and Vice-President may authorize up to $200 without Executive Council or PSA Council approval, except they may not authorize funds for themselves in any amount without PSA Council approval.
5. The Executive Council may approve amounts not exceeding $500.
6. Any person requesting more than $500 in a calendar year from the fund must have the approval of the PSA Council.
7. Funds are allotted to students in good faith. Each individual must decide whether or not they will be able to give all or some of the funds back to the PERF.

Article IX Ratification and Amendment

Section A This Constitution shall be ratified upon receiving a 2/3 majority of the vote cast by the Student Association in a referendum for that purpose in continuity with the pre-standing Constitution.

1. The proposed Constitution shall be posted in a public place; and
2. All Council members shall be given copies of the proposed Constitution.

Section B Amendments to the Constitution

Short of repealing the constitution, amendments may be proposed at any time during the regular school term by any Association member in writing to the President or by a motion in writing submitted by a member of the PSA Council. The proposed amendments must be submitted to the President no later than 7 days prior to the next regularly scheduled PSA Council meeting. The PSA President may in his/her discretion call a special meeting of the PSA Council to only consider the proposed constitutional amendments. Any called special meeting must take place no sooner than 7 days following the distribution of the proposed amendments to the PSA Council. The proposed amendments will be adopted upon a 2/3 vote of PSA Council members present and voting.

Article X Repeal

The pre-standing Constitution and any laws of the Association in conflict with this Constitution are hereby repealed and declared null and void with ratification according to Article IX, Section A. Subsequent constitutional substitutions shall be valid so far as they conform to and include Article IX, Section A and Article X of this Constitution. Persons elected under prior the constitution shall be grandfathered into office for the first year under this Constitution.