

Iranian Student Alliance in America (ISAA)

Start-up Kit

Introduction:

To strengthen the purpose and capacity of ISAA, it is fundamental to the existence of the group to establish chapters wherever there may be a potential for one to be relevant. Through a network of ISAA chapters, we can more effectively spread the universal message of our group and encourage one another in this monumental task. Before you take this undertaking be sure to be well versed with the mission statement or objectives of the group. It is fundamental that you believe in the objectives of ISAA. UC Berkeley ISAA is the headquarters of the student group and has a very democratic and extensive leadership. Other chapters have less people involved or a smaller Iranian/Iranian-American population, and therefore smaller groups of people are running the group. Thus, the below constitution might not be applicable to your certain environment. Feel free to use our constitution for your group or as an example to write your own.

Step 1 - Establishing the Organization:

It is your right, which is respected by your school, to establish a chapter of an organization at your respective institution of higher learning. Every school and its procedures are different. There are certain general steps you need to follow to ensure a smooth establishment of ISAA at your school. We will provide general steps as to how we established the organization at the University of California, Berkeley. You need to first go to your school's administrative building and acquire the right paperwork to establish the club, or you may be able to find the same resources online. Although ISAA is an organization, the school will sponsor it as a club. You might need to have a couple people who share your enthusiasm for creating ISAA at your school to help with the paperwork. For example, you might need more than one person to sign on as official signatories for the club. UC Berkeley requires 4 signatories to launch the club.

Step 2 - The Constitution:

After the prescribed paperwork is filled out, your respective school will require your ISAA chapter to have a constitution, in which a copy of it must be turned in to your college's administrative building. The founding members of ISAA at UC Berkeley drafted as their constitution a traditional, simple, and universal experimental constitution. After the organization expanded quickly with new members, ideas, and resources, this universal constitution became ineffective. After its infancy semester, the Board of Directors (leadership) of ISAA decided to create a new constitution to fit the atmosphere and climate for its members of UC Berkeley. Therefore the below constitution was drafted after some experimentation and is now very relevant, applicable, and

professional. Feel free to make whatever alterations you deem to better fit your environment.

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Constitution of

Iranian Student Alliance in America **(ISAA)**

ARTICLE I – NAME

Iranian Student Alliance in America (ISAA)

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

We, the members of Iranian Student Alliance in America, wish to increase the general public's awareness regarding Iran and the historical, political, and social issues affecting the Iranian community; promote the Iranian/Iranian-American community, identity, and culture; encourage greater Iranian representation and involvement in the American Political area, and ultimately provide a forum to address and discuss issues concerning the greater Iranian community.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Active members are those individuals who help with the organization of the student group by holding a leadership position and/or those individuals who attend at least one third of the exclusively ISAA held events, (meetings qualify as events) for the entire academic year (fall and spring semester respectively). Spring admits can become members by attending at least one third of the exclusively ISAA held events of the spring semester. The Publicity Director is responsible for keeping track of the attendees, and updating the active member record.

Only active members are entitled to vote and elect the president and have the right to propose and vote on constitutional amendments.

Only currently registered students, faculty and staff may be active members in a registered student organization.

We will not haze according to California State Law and will not restrict membership based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, physical and mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship status as a covered veteran (special disabled veteran, Vietnam-era veteran or any other veteran who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.)

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS & ELECTIONS

Section A. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall have general authority and responsibility for the ongoing affairs of the Iranian Student Alliance in America. The Board of Directors' decisions may only be overruled if two members of the active members vote to bring the issue in front of the members who then must obtain a two-thirds majority to overrule the decision in question. The Board of Directors members are the liaison between ISAA and the community, and their main function is to guide the interns and manage the different committees that carry out the planning of projects and events. (see Article V and VI)

Section B.

Composition of the Board of Directors

The President, Publicity Director, Finance Director, Communications Director, and Resources Director will constitute the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors reserves the right to chair a committee. The following is a detailed description of each member of the Board of Director's explicit duties (implicit duties not included):

President - (position elected by active members)

1. Fulfill the position of Chief Executive Officer of the Iranian Student Alliance in America
2. Act as the primary liaison/signatory with UCB Student Activities and Services, ensuring the club is reregistered every semester, that all the activities are in accordance with University policy, and that rooms have been reserved for our meetings, etc.
3. Act as the official representative to other organizations, businesses and the media.
4. Carry out the mandates, policies, and directives of the Board of Directors.
5. Appoint, in consultation with the Board of Directors, standing and ad-hoc committees and coordinators of such committees.
6. Appoint, in consultation with the Board of Directors, up to 15 interns.
7. Preside over and create an agenda for all official meetings.
8. Administer the weekly officers meetings and the monthly general meetings.
9. Communicate and keep the Board, Committee chairs, other chapters, and devoted members updated on ISAA's internal affairs.
10. Send email updates, information, and news regarding ISAA to e-mail list. This duty can be split between the Publicity Director and the President.

Publicity Director - (application process and appointment)

1. Serve as advisor to the President regarding ISAA functions.
2. Act as a primary liaison/signatory with UCB Student Activities and Services, ensuring the club is reregistered every semester, that all the activities are in accordance with University policy, and that rooms have been reserved for our meetings, etc.
3. Perform such duties as the Board of Directors or President may assign
4. Maintain and update the ISAA sign-up list and the membership records.
5. Maintain an updated list of e-mail addresses of all interested students (members and non-members).
6. Send e-mail updates, information, and news regarding ISAA to e-mail list. This duty can be split between the President and the Publicity Director.
7. Publicize the organization and its events, i.e. fliers, business cards, banners, etc.
8. Actively organize methods for the recruitment of new members.
9. Produce and organize flyers for tabling each week
10. Organize classroom publicity (announcements, chalking on boards, etc)

Communications Director - (application process and appointment)

1. Serve as advisor to the President regarding ISAA functions.
2. Act as a primary liaison/signatory with UCB Student Activities and Services, ensuring the club is reregistered every semester, that all the activities are in accordance with University policy, and that rooms have been reserved for our meetings, etc.
3. Perform such duties as the President may assign.
4. Act as an official representative to other student organizations, non-profit organizations, businesses and the media.
5. Work and be in communication with different campus departments helpful and relevant to ISAA's purpose
6. Coordinates events with outside organizations

Resources Director - (application process and appointment)

1. Serve as advisor to the President regarding ISAA functions.
2. In case a fourth signatory is needed, act as a signatory with UCB Student Activities and Services, ensuring the club is reregistered every semester, that all our activities are in accordance with University policy, and that rooms have been reserved for our meetings, etc.
3. Perform such duties as the President may assign.
4. Make all necessary preparations for organizational meetings and record and distribute all minutes of meetings in a timely fashion.
5. Document organization activities, e-mails, fliers, and history (scrapbook).
6. Organize and maintain an effective tabling schedule.

7. Maintain the storage room and Sproul table, making sure the storage room is fully stocked and the table has all the necessary documents.

Finance Director –(application process and appointment)

1. Serve as advisor to the President regarding ISAA functions.
2. Act as the primary liaison/signatory with UCB Student Activities and Services, ensuring the club is reregistered every semester, that all our activities are in accordance with University policy, and that rooms have been reserved for our meetings, etc.
3. Perform such duties as the President may assign.
4. Act as accountant of ISAA, recording, documenting, and storing all finances.
5. Specializing in acquiring/purchasing all needed materials and financing all costs regarding the event.
6. Apply for relevant grants to fund ISAA events and programs.
7. Help organize and manage fundraisers.

Section C. Election and Appointments of the Board of Directors

In order for an individual to be elected into office for Presidency, an individual shall undergo an application process and then must be elected to office by active ISAA members. The candidate must receive a simple majority vote of the active ISAA members. All other Board of Directors positions will undergo an application and appointment process that will be held after the following year's President is elected. All appointments for the other positions on the Board of Directors (Publicity, Communications, Finance, Resources) will be made by the current Board of Directors and the President-Elect with a simple majority vote. All officers will hold their seat for a term of one full year (May 1st to May 1st). Exceptions to these term limits include prior knowledge of absence, such as ending the academic school year early, going abroad, or other emergencies.

Elections and appointments will be held at least 3 weeks before the end of the office term, unless an officer vacates their seat, at which an election (for President) or appointment will be held for that seat alone. Any registered student may apply for a position. An elected or appointed Board of Directors officer may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of active members. All active members will be notified in advance anytime a vote is to be held.

Section D. Code of Conduct

By assuming a position in the Board of Directors, the representatives, when acting on behalf of the organization, must abide in accordance with the objectives of ISAA.

ARTICLE V - INTERNS

With the consultation of all the directors, the president can appoint a maximum of 15 interns from those interested in applying for the position. Interns will hold their seat for the academic school year. Each intern has the freedom to resign at any time. Any director can have an intern removed, if they are not fulfilling their tasks, with the support of a simple majority of the board of directors, but the intern must be notified at least a week in advance before any action is taken. Interns help to organize and coordinate ISAA projects and events by sitting on a committee. It is an intern's responsibility to participate in the decision making process regarding any major issue related to ISAA and to help with the organization of the student group. Interns must participate in at least 1 planning committee organized and headed by the Board of Directors each semester.

ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEES

It is the job of all Board of Directors to organize and head at least one project-oriented committee and see to it that the committee fulfills its objectives. These committees will be chaired by a Board of Directors member and will operate autonomously. It is through these committees that projects are carried out. Interns reserve the right to propose committees, at which time the proposed committee will be reviewed by the Board of Directors and decided upon accordingly.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

The Iranian Student Alliance in America will hold a general informational meeting at the beginning of each semester. Any member of the Board of Directors has the right to call a meeting, however all members of the Board of Directors must agree upon meetings and must be present at all meetings, unless prior notice is given either by email or by phone. All new project proposals must be made and agreed upon at Board of Directors meetings. Board of Directors meetings shall be held at least bi-weekly.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

Any active member of the Iranian Student Alliance in America may propose amendments to the constitution. Once an amendment is proposed, the Board of Directors will meet and discuss and decide on the action to be taken on the proposed amendment. In order for amendments to be ratified, there must be a three-fourths vote from the Board of Directors and active members of ISAA. *All amendments, additions or deletions must be filed with the Office of Student Life, 102 Sproul Hall.*

ARTICLE VIII – DISSOLUTION

Dissolution will be decided if 95% of the group members vote to dissolve the Iranian Student Alliance in America and two-thirds of the officers vote to dissolve the organization. *All remaining privately obtained funds shall be donated to another non-profit organization. All unspent ASUC funds shall remain property of the ASUC.*

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Step 3 - Recruiting New Members:

On UC Berkeley's campus, there's an area where clubs, fraternities and sororities set up tables and distribute information about their respective organizations. When ISAA was established at UC Berkeley, a few committed members tabled and got students walking to class to sign up on an email list. Just a note, UC Berkeley's campus has a storage facility where clubs can store their tables, chairs, and supplies when they are not in use. Your institution might have such a facility or you may be forced to other measures. For example, before ISAA became an official organization, we were not allowed to reserve a storage locker. Therefore, every morning the President would drop off the table and chairs by using his car, and would pick them up every afternoon to take home. (Tabling is up to your chapter and your environment, you may decide to table, once a week, everyday, or none at all) Also, those committed members went to the Middle East related and Persian languages courses being taught at UC Berkeley, and announced the organization and passed out a sign up sheet before the professor began his/her lecture. Those committed members then emailed everyone the time and place of meetings. As of that moment on, ISAA has had a general meeting at least once every month to discuss projects and group expansion.

As a side note, please remember that ISAA is not just for Iranians, but for all those who are interested in Iranian issues in Iran and abroad.

Step 4 - Funds:

Your university awards each club a certain quantity of money each semester or year once your club is officially established. It might take a couple weeks to process the application and get money from the university. Those who are committed and are financially capable can follow in the footsteps of the initial founders of ISAA at UC Berkeley. The ISAA President used his own money to buy a table, chairs, and to make

fliers, while the club was being processed by the school. After the club got some money, he was reimbursed in full. The President didn't wait until the school gave ISAA money to move and advertise for the club. He spent his own money to organize and launch the group as soon as the semester began and was reimbursed later. He was able to keep track about how much money ISAA owed by holding on to all receipts, even the ones pertaining to copies. Group members can always help pitch in for funds before the school allocates them money. The amount of money each school provides also varies. At UC Berkeley, first-year organizations only receive \$200, second year groups receive \$400, and then \$600, etc. Your chapter can also hold fundraisers or raise funds off of ticket sales to events.

#### Step 5 - Website:

ISAA already has a website at [isaa.berkeley.edu](http://isaa.berkeley.edu). This is a universal website to be shared mutually by all ISAA chapters. **The best way to promote your chapter and spread its message is to bring attention to the website.** The site contains much substance and promotes culture, a forum for discussion, identity, and awareness. What is required of your chapter is a paragraph written by a founding member as to why he/she has established ISAA and why he/she supports this group – a "Statement of Solidarity." This paragraph will be set up under your school's name in the "Chapters" section. You can either announce your events by submitting a "Calendar of Events," which would go under the "Chapters" section or through your own group's email list. We will not be able to announce each of your events on our site because the webmaster simply doesn't have the time to update the website every other day. You can also announce each of your events through the forum, which attracts many internet visitors.

#### Step 6 - Banners:

At UC Berkeley, there's a railing on the second floor of the MLK building where clubs hang banners representing the group. Additionally, each group tabling on UC Berkeley's campus has a club banner hanging from their table. If your school has that sort of an environment where you need a banner, they can be expensive. Copy stores sell them from anywhere between \$150.00 to \$200.00. We found a business that made us two quality banners for \$75.00. If your chapter wants to make banners and can't find a better deal than two banners for \$75.00 or one for \$40.00 then contact:

Nima Alimagham at [nimavelii@msn.com](mailto:nimavelii@msn.com) or by phone at (310) 809-6008.

If you are located near Orange County, southern California, you can either pick up the banners, or they can be sent to you. All you have to do is inform Mr. Alimagham of your order for an ISAA banner and the measurements you need, and he'll know what to do. He already has the format and structure of the banner saved. The banners he made for us include an Iran outline logo with the acronym "ISAA" in middle, the name of the group "Iranian Student Alliance in America" and the group web address [isaa.berkeley.edu](http://isaa.berkeley.edu), which will be applicable to your group as well. The banners serve as good advertisement for the group and in particular and most importantly, the universal website.

#### Step 7 – Projects:

There are several projects that we believe would be beneficial if all chapters participated as well, such as our journal *Goftegoo: Dialogue on Iran and Iranians*. Every semester we are putting together the publication, we can send you a digital copy of the magazine for you to get copies printed for your respective audience. The magazine's substance is universally.

Projects are the basis of your group. The ISAA chapter's leadership makes sure the group is funded, organized, registered, and everyone up-to-date with ISAA affairs. Projects are carried out as the basic function of the group to get its message across. Every member and board member can take on a project. Examples: three students (one being the president and one being the Resource Director) jointly have organized a 2 unit student run course on contemporary Iran and have scheduled their own lectures, screenings of documentaries related to Iran, guest lectures, and discussions on certain topics; another member is in charge of organizing at least 2 Iranian movie nights for the semester, one member is the editor of the publication (Goftegoo), another is charge of the website (Communications Director), 2 members have organized a huge 3 part lecture series, one member has organized an open forum where people would have the freedom and opportunity to say whatever they feel like saying, 2 members have organized 3 Iranian poetry nights where people read poetry in Persian and in English. 1 member has organized screenings of documentaries pertaining to the revolution and Iranian history (If you wish to obtain copies of these great documentaries contact the Berkeley chapter). Projects are the purpose of the group. Meetings are held to think of projects and group expansion.

#### Step 8 – Representing ISAA:

This is the most important step for each ISAA chapter to undertake. ISAA is headquartered at UC Berkeley. Many social movements have emerged from Berkeley's campus, i.e. the Free Speech Movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement, etc. Because of the fact that ISAA is headquartered at UC Berkeley, people from all over the world have paid special attention to the group. For that reason, people with their own agendas have and will continue to try to tarnish ISAA's legitimacy or attempt to hijack the group's reputation and prestige for their own purposes. It is important that every ISAA chapter adheres to the mission statement and not go astray from its principles. ISAA is a non-monarchist, non-communist, non-mujahideen, non-Islamist, non-revolutionary movement. We are not anti-Iranian regime nor are we pro-regime. We are completely independent and only wish to achieve our objectives in regards to spreading consciousness/awareness regarding Iranian and Iran related issues, promoting culture, community, and identity.

It is crucial that when advertising, speaking, writing, or expressing views regarding ISAA, one does not diverge from its principles. We feel that there are many "cultural" student groups that are highly apathetic, and many groups that are simply anti-regime and just spit revolutionary rhetoric. ISAA is the long lost middle group where an atmosphere of learning is provided and all views are respected.

Now that you've read through all the steps to set up an effective and organized ISAA chapter, contact one of the most active members of the group at [isaa.berkeley@gmail.com](mailto:isaa.berkeley@gmail.com).

Additionally, make sure that your chapter and ISAA headquarters are constantly updating one another and keeping a steady line of communication. Good luck and congratulations on undertaking a worthy and grand task!