

Association for Bangladeshi Students (ABS) at Virginia Tech

GUIDELINE AND POLICY HANDBOOK

Prepared & proposed by:

ABS Constitution Committee on February 26, 2006

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Chapter I: Principles for smooth functioning of ABS

In addition to fundamental principles as outlined in the constitution, ABS will follow the following principles for its smooth functioning:

- a) It is strongly recommended that each departing ABS board will prepare a detail report of all its activities (such as strategic achievements, events, summary of earnings and expenses) along with their comments and suggestion for future improvement. All such reports will be archived and will be considered “Official ABS documents”.
- b) ABS meetings will be run in a democratic way where each member will be given a chance to deliver his/her views on the topic of discussion.
- c) Apart from mandatory meetings, ABS board can call for special meeting ahead of important events such as “International week at Virginia Tech”.
- d) ABS will not care or interfere with anyone’s personal problems or choices. But if any misunderstanding develops from ABS related activity, members can discuss to resolve the issue so that ABS interest is not affected.
- e) ABS will extend formal “**Note of appreciation**” for any individual or group achievement of any member/members (Student, non-student and alumni).
- f) ABS members can sign a “**Gift card**” expressing their appreciation for a departing “Executive board”.
- g) ABS will offer a standard “**Token gift**” for each graduating person and any member leaving NRV area who was a paid member of the organization.
- h) ABS may honor an invited “**Guest performer**” for an ABS organized event by a suitable gift.
- i) ABS will try to communicate will alumni for their donations through a “courtesy notice” in any form (preferably by electronic media).
- j) All ABS members have to follow the common traditional rules and regulations of Bangladeshi culture and society during ABS organized event. ABS requires its members not to engage in any activity during ABS hosted event which is directly contradictory with Bangladeshi tradition.
- k) ABS board will set the amount to be paid for membership fee. Current rates are:

Undergraduate student: \$15

Graduate Student: \$20

Graduate Student + Spouse: \$25

Non-Student + Family: \$30

The rates will be reviewed every year by the ABS board and can be changed upon discussion with the members.

Chapter II: Overall Fund Management

ABS will try to optimize investment and expenses to meet the goals of the organizations. The possible sources for generating funds can be membership fee, participation in International week, alumni and peer contribution, and organizing fund raising events. ABS will maintain a “**Bank account**” to operate its financial activities.

ABS will follow the following rules to both manage funds and make smart investment decisions:

- a) New ABS board will start its “earning” by collecting the “membership fee” at the beginning of the school year.
- b) A minimum of **\$200** have to be maintained in the account all the time and this will never be withdrawn from the account unless 100% of both the student and non-student members decide to empty to bank account for some unavoidable circumstances.
- c) From the beginning of the school year (August) to major fund raising event (March-April), a minimum Threshold of **\$700** (or the “**starting balance**” if initial fund lower than \$700) will have to be maintained in the account. This includes all time minimum of \$200 as stated in (b).
- d) From March/April to July, the ABS fund can be below “Threshold minimum” (still be higher than all time minimum \$200) to allow for profit making investment only. If the fund reaches **\$600** at any time, no more donations will be made.
- e) Existing ABS board must give a “minimum handover balance” to the following board during transfer of power at the beginning of the school year. This amount is calculated as: **Minimum Handover Balance = \$200 + “Sum of all Investment”** (for profit making).
- f) In addition to “minimum handover balance”, entire existing fund (including surplus) has to be delivered to the following ABS board.

A spreadsheet will be provided to help out the ABS board to meet above requirements in fund management. However, ABS board is free to use this optional tool or manage in a different way as long as the requirements are satisfied.

Chapter III: Event Management Policy

A. General Event Participation Policy

In general ABS shall follow the principles outlined below

- ABS may participate in any VIRGINIA TECH organized program.
- ABS will not participate in any event in collaboration with any other organization which does not comply with the fundamental policy (non-profit, non-political, and secular) of ABS.
- ABS may provide logistics support to its member(s) to arrange a personal or group event.

B. ABS Sponsored High Priority Event: International Week

Street fair is the single most important event of ABS. It is indeed the main fundraising program of ABS where ABS produces Bangladeshi traditional food and sells them in day long fair as well as promotes Bangladeshi culture through several display board.

- ❖ As this international week is all about promoting culture of the countries, ABS shall promote only Bangladeshi culture and food.
- ❖ ABS members will abide by the guidelines set forth by CISO. Close communication of ABS board members with CISO is essential during this time.
- ❖ International week is an intensive program. It is strongly recommended for existing ABS Board to communicate with past board members to obtain their past experience about the event.
- ❖ ABS will decide whether ABS will participate in any other program (for example luncheon and any cultural / talent show) apart from street fair depending on available resources.
- ❖ Within a month prior to the beginning of the international week (which is usually during first or second week of April) board shall arrange a special general meeting. The key agenda for the meeting is planning about street fair and international week and distribution of workload among members. A list of possible topics are given below –
 - Discuss about Backdrop and Display table.
 - Discuss about shopping of ingredients (cost optimization is needed).
 - Discuss about possible menu. (only authentic Bangladeshi cuisine)
 - Distribute items ‘to cook’ among the members.
 - Distribute and plan for shopping in advance.
 - Discuss about CISO requirement and allocate sufficient member to volunteer CISO during street fair.
- ❖ Rent necessary heating pans and make reservations for ABS stall, tables, and others necessary items from CISO.

- ❖ Creating a backdrop display during street fair is voluntary and ABS will bear the expense.
- ❖ Generally CISO will designate a kitchen to prepare food on the day before street fair. Members will maintain hygienic environment as food inspectors will be inspecting randomly.
- ❖ ABS may provide refreshments and food during the preparation of food in recognition of ABS members' contribution and hard work. Exception may be taken into consideration upon all attending members' opinion.
- ❖ On the night before street fair, all food is to be stored in the CISO designated coolers. First task on the day of street fair is to get all the food out of the coolers and take them to the CISO designated kitchens for heating.
- ❖ During street fair, under direct supervision of ABS executive board, members will participate in all the activities throughout the street fair on a rotational basis. Duties include but not limited to helping CISO, setting up the stall and backdrop, selling food, supplying prepared food to the stall, collecting money, clean up, etc.
- ❖ In the evening of street fair, ABS board will arrange another special meeting. Board will announce the outcome of the street fair and celebrate. Food/refreshments will also be arranged by ABS. If possible second ABS general meeting will be merged with this meeting.

C. Other ABS Sponsored Event

Apart from mandatory street fair, ABS may sponsor a set of optional events. ABS executive board has no obligation on pursuing these events. However, if ABS decides to participate, then ABS will be the official sponsor and bear all the expenses of these programs. ABS will also sponsor the following types of optional programs –

- Any cultural program that represents Bangladesh and Bangladeshi culture in VIRGINIA TECH campus.
- Any talk show / seminar hosted by Bangladeshi expert that will give exposure to Bangladesh in VIRGINIA TECH campus.
- Any Film/Documentary Show related to Bangladesh that will give exposure to Bangladesh in VIRGINIA TECH campus.
- Bangladesh Day or Bangladesh Week.

D. National Events of Bangladesh:

ABS may arrange program to celebrate Bangladeshi national events such as International Mother Language Day (21st February), Independence Day (26th March), Bangla New Year (Pahela Boishakh), Victory Day (16th December) depending on resources available.

If ABS participate any Bangladeshi national event, then ABS will be the official sponsor of the event and shall provide full or partial funding and it can be a joint effort of ABS and community members. Monetary support from community members will be accepted and a close participation of community member.

E. Religious Event:

ABS will not organize or sponsor any religious event; however ABS will provide logistics support if needed. Such an event will not be called as ABS event.

F. Recreational Event:

A set of picnic, camping and outing events are arranged by community people all through the year especially in summer. ABS shall neither sponsor nor provide funding in any such activities. However ABS may provide logistic support if needed.

Recommendation: It is **recommended** that ABS authority may take initiative for at a picnic or camping in summer.

ABS will not sponsor any personal event of our members such as marriage anniversary, birthday party. However ABS will extend their courtesy and provide logistic support if needed.

Apart from the categories mentioned above, ABS may decide to participate **in** any other kind of event upon agreement of the majority of the members and resources available.

Chapter IV: Donation Policy

A. General Donation Policy

ABS is an unorthodox donating organization. In general ABS will follow the following principles -

- ABS will always try to focus at the level of society where established charity organizations can not penetrate.
- ABS shall not provide donations to any organization that doesn't comply with any section of the constitution of ABS.
- Bangladesh and Bangladeshi citizens will get clear priority over any other national event or citizen of another country.
- Any ABS current member or alumni in direct need will get highest priority and it will be decided immediately.
- ABS will always seek possibilities to honor or help out the freedom fighters.
- ABS shall consider any prospective donation proposal which is not specifically prohibited by this 'Donation Policy'.
- All ABS donations will be one time donations; ABS shall not provide donations to any source where ABS has to pledge for allocating money at regular interval.

B. Donation Management Policy:

Every donation proposal will be categorized into two groups:

a) Proposal requiring immediate attention to maximize benefit:

These proposals should have the characteristics that the “need” has to be fulfilled within a short (say within one months or less) period of time or the need is for meeting specific one time deadline of events (for example, paying academic fees within certain date). All natural disasters of Bangladesh or humane situations like group oppression and sufferings will be considered in this category. If any one related to ABS (student, non-student member and alumni) or their direct family (spouse, children, parents, immediate brother & sisters) in need, the case will be considered in this category.

ABS board will give decisions to such proposals within 15 days upon discussion with all its members (communication can be in any form).

b) Proposal requiring assistance but does not need immediately:

These proposals will have the characteristics that the “need” does not require immediate help to maximize the benefit or the cause has long term effect so that it can be helped at different stages later or the event is a recurring one and ABS donation will not fix the problem permanently. For example, recurring academic issues (buying books and supplies), general poverty of a person, social movement and rehabilitation, infrastructure and organizational benefits will be considered

in this category. All such proposals will be accepted over a period of time and decisions will be made each semester at a convenient time to be decided by the ABS board.

The common principles to be followed here are:

- ABS will consider and judge each donation proposal based on its donation regulation. However, ABS can never guarantee (given limited resources) whether a certain proposal will be served even if it qualifies for donation.
- ABS board will not make any donation decision by themselves without discussing with members (communication by meeting or any other form).
- If two parallel proposals (one for individual and other group of affected people) come at the same time and both cases require immediate decision, ABS will consider providing assistance in both cases rather than deciding on one. ABS may also consider maximizing benefit for the individual case from its own fund and try to raise part of the money for the group case.
- Donation decision will also be consistent with overall fund management policy (chapter II of this document)

C. Proposal of Donation

- ❖ Any ABS member and alumni can bring a proposal that is allowed by the guideline given above.
- ❖ Anyone who is not related to ABS can also bring a donation proposal but it has to be forwarded by anyone related to ABS.
- ❖ The person who is proposing a prospective donation case may also propose a specific amount for donation. However ABS can donate a different amount.

D. Donation policy for Bangladeshi citizens

ABS believes, with its limited resource, it can be most effective in helping out individuals rather than donating in a large scale scenario. Therefore donation to an individual will always be considered seriously. However, it is strictly recommended to double-check the authenticity of the case before making any decision.

- ❖ Upon agreement of ABS members, ABS may provide donation from ‘Mahmud Memorial Fund’ to the following cases
 - Any Bangladeshi student attending any higher educational institute (most preferably public university) requires monetary assistance to continue education.
 - Any Bangladeshi student attending any higher educational institute (most preferably public university) requires monetary assistance for medical treatment.
 - Any Bangladeshi student attending secondary or higher secondary education requires one time donation that may have significant impact to prolong education life. For example -

paying the fees of S.S.C or H.S.C Exam, bearing the expenses to buy books at S.S.C or H.S.C level.

- Any Bangladeshi citizen requires monetary assistance for medical treatment.
- Any other option will be decided later case by case basis.

❖ ABS shall **not** provide any donation from ‘Mahmud Memorial Fund’ to the following cases

- Any Bangladeshi student attending any educational institute which does not comply with non-discriminatory policy followed by ABS.
- Any Bangladeshi student attending primary, secondary, higher secondary education requires monetary assistance to continue education where the need is recurring. For example – paying the monthly tuition.
- Any other individuals (who are non-Bangladeshi and non-VIRGINIA TECH student).

E. Donation policy for Bangladeshi events

Any event related to Bangladesh will get the second highest attention for donation from ‘Mahmud Memorial Fund’. Upon agreement of ABS members, ABS may provide donation from ‘Mahmud Memorial Fund’ to the following cases

- Any national level natural disaster where Bangladesh government seeks additional help; for example – flood, cyclone at sea shore.
- Any national level humane situation arising from social group oppression; for example – minority abuse in 2001.
- Any social movement/activity/campaign that can raise social awareness among people; for example – ‘The Daily Prothom-Alo Acid Victim Rehab Program’.

ABS shall **not** provide any donation from ‘Mahmud Memorial Fund’ to the following cases

- Any movement/activity/campaign which doesn’t comply with any section of the constitution of ABS.

F. Donation policy for VIRGINIA TECH related issues

Upon agreement of ABS members, ABS may provide donation from ‘Mahmud Memorial Fund’ to any student enrolled in VIRGINIA TECH. Appropriate criterion to be followed is given below

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- Any VIRGINIA TECH student requires monetary assistantship to continue his/her education at VIRGINIA TECH may be eligible to receive donation from ABS. In this case only immediate one time needs will be considered; recurring monetary needs will not be considered.
- Any VIRGINIA TECH student requires monetary assistantship on extreme humanitarian ground (for example - critical health condition) may also obtain donation.
- Amount to be donated will be decided case by case.

- Fundraising campaign may be conducted only if the student is a Bangladeshi by birth or by family heritage.
- Any other VIRGINIA TECH student organization will not be considered for donation.

G. Donation policy for SAARC countries

Upon agreement of ABS members, ABS may provide token donation up to **\$150** from ‘Mahmud Memorial Fund’. The basic principles for this category is given beneath -

- ABS will be very selective on making this type of donation.
- ABS may donate in any national (natural or man-made) disaster (very large magnitude) where respective government seeks additional help; for example – flood, cyclone, Tsunami.
- Donation will be considered only if the issue is being raised by any ABS member.
- No individuals of these countries shall obtain donation from ABS.
- No fundraising campaign will be conducted from ABS on types of cases that falls in this category.

H. Donation policy for rest of the world

Upon agreement of ABS members, ABS may provide token donation up to **\$100** from ‘Mahmud Memorial Fund’. Appropriate criterion to followed is given below –

- Any unprecedented disaster that has significance in the whole world; for example – September 11, 2001 Twin Tower Attack.
- Donation will be considered only if the issue is being raised by any ABS member.
- No individuals of these countries shall obtain donation from ABS, only exception will made for VIRGINIA TECH students.
- No fundraising campaign will be conducted from ABS on types of cases.

I. Fundraising campaign

❖ ABS Board may conduct fundraising campaign in the following events -

- Any national disaster (natural or man made) related to Bangladesh.
- Any program that raises social awareness in Bangladesh.
- Any Bangladeshi citizen by birth or family heritage requires special help.
- Any other case, which is not prohibited in the list below, shall be considered case by case.

❖ ABS shall not conduct any fundraising campaign in the following cases –

- ABS shall not organize any fundraising campaign in a national (natural or man-made) disaster occurred in any country other than Bangladesh.

- ABS shall not jointly organize any fundraising campaign with any organization that does not comply with ABS fundamental policies.
- ABS shall not jointly organize any fundraising campaign with any other VIRGINIA TECH student organization.

- ❖ Fundraising campaign will be conducted during ABS meeting, via listserv, via forum or even any social gathering.

- ❖ In case of on-site campaign, people will not be pushed to donate immediately or to pledge immediately; rather ABS authority will provide them all the options so that people can donate freely at their convenient time and means. For example – ABS authority may tell people that they can donate on-site if they want or donate later using ABS PAYPAL or by cash or personal checks.

APPENDIX

A. ABS CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following persons served as a member of the ABS constitution committee:

- **S.M. Shajedul Hasan** (Moderator, ABS constitution committee)
- **Mahin Khan** (Member, ABS constitution committee)
- **Prasun Kanti Majumdar** (Member, ABS constitution committee)
- **Chowdhury MR Shahriar** (Member, ABS constitution committee)
- **Ridwan Bin Abdul Quaium** (Member, ABS constitution committee)
- **Mahjabeen Zaheda** (Member, ABS constitution committee)

B. MEMBERS OF THE ABS BOARD 2005-2006

The following persons were the members of the ABS Board during the formation period of ABS constitution:

- **S.M. Shajedul Hasan** (President, ABS Board 2005-2006)
- **Nazia Sabrina Majumder** (General Secretary, ABS Board 2005-2006)
- **Mahmud Harun** (Treasurer, ABS Board 2005-2006)