



Mediators Beyond Borders™

Partnering for Peace & Reconciliation

MBB University of Pittsburgh Chapter Constitution

Purpose: MBB is a non-profit provider of pro bono conflict resolution capacity building within post-conflict communities. A key goal of MBB is to develop indigenous skills for group facilitation, public dialogue, strategic planning, collaborative negotiation, and peer mediation. Teams of volunteer mediators will conduct skill-building workshops consistent with the norms, values, and culture of the locale. The mission is to increase the capacity of hostile communities to prevent, resolve, and recover from violent conflict. An array of conflict alternatives can be explored by strategic integration into the political, economic, and social institutions. The same team would volunteer for between 1-3 weeks per year, over a number of years in the same country, to build sustainable initiatives and to develop local peacemakers and peacekeepers. MBB will partner with existing NGO's and ADR entities to provide experienced mediators as trainers and consultants to complement and expand the conflict resolution capacity of already funded peace projects. Students may become involved in MBB in order to learn alternative dispute resolution processes and their importance in a hands-on environment. Participating in and contributing to MBB initiatives will allow students the opportunity to travel to developing nations and provide help to people in post-conflict communities.

Activities: To fulfill its purpose, MBB will sponsor a range of activities, programs and services. Events will include hosting forums and discussions with speakers who are experienced mediators, involved in the political realm, or representatives from partner nations or organizations. Movie screenings will show films related to international conflict resolution initiatives and their needs, including Hotel Rwanda, Battle of Algiers, and Iraq in Fragments. MBB will host fundraisers to help raise dues and travel expenses for students, and consistent meetings with frequent talks by professors from various departments within the university will take place.

Membership Requirements: A diverse membership will be encouraged of students from all academic graduate programs, of all races, creeds, ages, sexes and nationalities. Members must attend at least three events or meetings per semester to maintain membership. No hazing or illegal discrimination will be used as a condition of membership in the organization.

Financial Obligations of Members: Each member will be responsible for paying national MBB dues of 5 cents per day, or \$18.25 per year. Fundraisers throughout the year will help raise money for student's dues if a student cannot afford to pay the national dues.

Associate Membership: Faculty, staff and alumni of the University and non-University persons may participate in the meetings and activities of the organization but may not vote, hold office, or serve in formal leadership positions.

Membership Procedures: Recruitment of new members will be constant, with extra focus on the beginning of the Fall semester. Meetings will be held the last week in August and the second week in September which will be open to all new members. At those meetings, forms will be given out in which potential members will sign-up. All members that meet the membership requirements will be accepted. The privileges of membership will include access to meetings, the ability to run for formal office, the ability to vote for officers, the ability to attend all meetings and events, and to potentially be involved in international travel and initiatives. Members who do not meet the membership requirements and stay active with membership dues will be made inactive for the remainder of the semester. If the member does not meet the requirements in the beginning of the following semester, then that person will be removed from membership in the organization.

Voting Privileges: Voting privileges are limited to active student members in good standing with the organization. Requirements to maintain voting privileges include paying dues and meeting membership requirements.

Officers: MBB must maintain at least three student officers currently enrolled and in good academic and social standing at the University of Pittsburgh to be certified. Faculty, staff, alumni and external affiliates may not serve as officers. MBB's officers will include a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Publications Chair, and Events Chair. The President will have overall control of the organization and interact constantly with MBB International. The Vice-President will assist the President in operations and be available to take over presidential duties should the need arise. The Secretary will take minutes of all meetings and organize the Pitt MBB website with announcements. The Treasurer will be in charge of collecting and managing dues from members. The Treasurer will also keep track of financial books, including spending and earnings from events and fundraisers. The Publications Chair will be in charge of contact with local media including Pitt News and Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Additionally, that person will be in charge of take action to promote MBB events and publicize the workings of the group. The Events Chair will be in charge of organizing specific events, making sure that all events and meetings are safe, and that all risk to any students during meeting, events, or travel will be limited.

Election of Officers: The election of officers will take place once a year during the close of the Spring semester at a meeting in early April. Officers are nominated by anyone present at the meeting who meets the membership requirements. All Officers are required to be members in good standing who meet the membership requirements. The President and Vice-President must have been active within MBB and in good standing for at least two consecutive semesters. The President must have held another position as an Officer to be eligible for President. The election process will be by printed ballots, in which each member present at the election meeting will circle the name of the candidate on the ballot. Ballots of members not present may be counted if received by the Secretary in advance of the election. The results will be announced by email within 3 hours of the vote. A simple majority of votes cast will be required to win an position. An officer can hold only one position at a time. No proxy ballots can be cast.

Terms of Office: Terms of office will begin after the Spring semester and end the last day of the at the close of the following Spring semester.

Removal of Officers: Officers can be removed by a vote of more than 75% of the active members in good standing. A new vote will then be taken to fill that position, and that new officer will fulfill the remainder of the current term.

Voting Powers of Officers: All members including officers will be allowed to vote.

Meetings: Regular meetings will be held at least once per month, and at least three times per semester. Anyone may attend meetings. Eight members must be present to constitute a quorum.

Finances: All spending must be approved by both the Treasurer, and either the President or Vice-President. All checks must be signed by two parties.

Advisor: MBB will have several faculty advisors. Professor Robert A. Creo will be the head faculty advisor, and contact from MBB International. Additionally, professors from various graduate programs will supervise and advise on issues to the organization.

External Affiliations: MBB will be a part of Mediators Without Border International, a non-profit organization run out of Pittsburgh. To be recognized as student organization of MBB, Pitt MBB will have to adhere to certain guidelines set by MBB International including payment of membership dues, consistent operation on a day-to-day basis, and monthly correspondence between MWV Officers and MBB International.

Amendments: The Constitution may be amended by the approval of 80% of the active members of MBB, and consent by a majority of the MBB Officers.