AFRICAN PALEOSCIENCES STUDENT SOCIETY

CONSTITUTION

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ADVANCING OUR FUTURE WITH CLUES FROM THE PAST

27 JULY 2026

Constitution of the African Paleosciences Student Council (APSC)

1. Preamble

The African Paleosciences Student Council (APSC) is the administrative and executive body of the African Paleosciences Student Society (APSS). It exists to unite, represent, and empower African students and Early Career Professionals (ECPs) in the fields of paleosciences—including archaeology, paleoanthropology, paleontology, and geology.

The APSC is committed to dismantling structural barriers to inclusion, fostering a continent-wide academic network, and promoting equitable access to resources, collaboration, and enrichment opportunities. We reject all forms of discrimination based on race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, nationality, or political orientation.

2. Mission Statement

The African Paleosciences Student Society (APSS) is dedicated to developing a vibrant, inclusive community of African scholars and practitioners in the paleosciences. Rooted in the recognition of Africa as the cradle of humanity, the APSS supports interdisciplinary research, fieldwork, and public scholarship that uplifts African voices and indigenous knowledge systems.

Our mission is to:

- Connect students and ECPs across institutions, disciplines, and regional borders.
- Create equitable access to academic and professional development opportunities.
- Champion the decolonisation of archaeological and paleoscientific knowledge.
- Foster equitable collaboration and transformation within the global academic community.

3. Objectives

As the executive and administrative body of the APSS, the APSC seeks to:

- **3.1** Promote collegiality and academic exchange among students and ECPs from across Africa and the global diaspora.
- **3.2** Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in research, fieldwork, and public engagement.

- **3.3** Advocate for equitable access to funding, learning resources, and career development.
- **3.4** Provide academic enrichment through conferences, workshops, and digital resource platforms.
- **3.5** Raise awareness and drive active engagement regarding the decolonisation of African paleosciences.
- **3.6** Represent the interests of students and ECPs to professional organisations and broader APSS senior leadership.
- **3.7** Encourage active membership and integration in related regional and international professional bodies (e.g., Eastern Africa Association for Palaeoanthropology and Palaeontology (EAAPP), Society of Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA), and PanAfrican Archaeological Association (PAA)).

4. Membership of the Society (APSS)

Membership in the Society is free and open to individuals across the following two categories:

4.1. Associate Members

- Individuals in the process of submitting required documentation or those interested in supporting the society who do not meet full criteria.
- Associate Members may access general resources, public platforms, and communications, but they are not eligible to vote in elections or hold Council positions.

4.2. Full Members

- Registered students at recognized African or international institutions, or Early Career Professionals (within four (4) years of graduation) working in or holding experience in a relevant field (e.g., archaeology, heritage studies, museum science, Cultural Resource Management (CRM), or academia).
- **Required Documentation:** To ensure accessibility, applicants must provide flexible proof of status, consisting of:
    - Proof of registration, a recent academic transcript, or proof of employment/affiliation (such as a short, signed statement of the place of employment and current position).
    - An updated Curriculum Vitae (CV) (2–4 pages).

- A copy of official identification (national ID, student ID, or passport).

4.3. Status and Application

All prospective members must apply through the official APSS platform. Members in good standing (i.e., with no pending or ongoing disciplinary action) are eligible to vote, run for office, and participate fully in all APSS initiatives.

5. The Council (APSC)

5.1. General Governance

- **5.1.1** The APSC shall be elected every two (2) years by the Full Members of the APSS.
- **5.1.2** The Council serves to guide, organise, and implement the Society's strategic initiatives.
- **5.1.3** Nominees for Council positions must be Full Members in good standing and commit to a two-year term.
- **5.1.4** Council members are expected to actively contribute to the planning and execution of both virtual and in-person events.
- **5.1.5 Regional Representation:** To ensure pan-African inclusivity, no single country or sub-region (Northern, Western, Central, Eastern, Southern Africa) may hold a monopoly on Council positions. The APSC will actively seek geographic and linguistic balance during the election and co-option processes.

5.2. Council Roles and Responsibilities

Each role supports the strategic direction of the APSS and fosters a culture of collaboration, equity, and professional development.

- **5.2.1 Chairperson:** Leads the APSC and represents students and ECPs on external boards and broader APSS senior leadership structures. Oversees general Council activities, external partnerships, prepares annual reports, and ensures mission alignment.
- **5.2.2 Vice-Chairperson:** Supports the Chairperson and serves as Acting Chair when necessary. Assists in inter-organisational coordination and internal Council development.
- **5.2.3 Secretary:** Manages meeting documentation, official records, internal communication, and general institutional correspondence.

- **5.2.4 Treasurer:** Manages all financial matters, including budgeting, grant applications, fundraising initiatives, and ensures strict fiscal accountability and reporting.
- **5.2.5 Events Coordinator:** Plans and executes workshops, field expeditions, webinars, and conference activities, while managing event logistics and participant outreach.
- **5.2.6 Membership Coordinator:** Oversees membership applications, communication, and database recordkeeping. Builds regional engagement strategies to track and foster society growth.
- **5.2.7 Social Media and Communications Officer:** Manages digital outreach across official platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X, Bluesky, LinkedIn, YouTube). Promotes member engagement, shares career opportunities, and publicises APSC activities.
- **5.2.8 Student Liaison Officer:** Facilitates direct communication between students and academic institutions, with a focus on reaching out to African and diaspora students, especially those in regional exchange or international programs.

5.3. Elections

- **5.3.1** Council elections shall occur digitally during the Virtual Biennial Meeting.
- **5.3.2** Members may self-nominate or nominate others. If insufficient nominations are received, the outgoing Council may approach members to stand for election.
- **5.3.3** Candidates must submit a short biography and motivation statement, and will be allocated a maximum of five (5) minutes to present their platform during the Virtual Biennial Meeting.
- **5.3.4** All Council positions are directly elected by Full Members, with the exception of the Chairperson.
- **5.3.5 Chairperson Selection:**
    - To maintain institutional memory, the Chairperson is chosen by the outgoing Council, preferably from individuals who have served at least one full Council term.
    - If no internal candidate is available, external nominations will be opened. External candidates must assist with event planning prior to elections and receive mentorship from the outgoing Chairperson.

    - The outgoing Chairperson shall become an *Ex-Officio* advisor to the new Council for a transitional period of six (6) months.

- **5.3.6 Election Objections:** All nominees may be subject to vetting or objections prior to elections, provided that:
    - Objections are submitted in writing to the Secretary with valid, evidence-backed reasoning.
    - Objections are formally endorsed by at least three (3) Full Members.
    - No post-election objections will be entertained.

5.4. Termination of Office

A Council member's term shall end prematurely if:

- **5.4.1** They resign in writing to the Executive.
- **5.4.2** They cease to meet the criteria of a Full Member.
- **5.4.3** They fail to attend three (3) consecutive meetings or six (6) meetings total annually without a valid, communicated explanation.
- **5.4.4** They are found to have violated the APSS Constitution or Code of Conduct following a fair disciplinary review.
- **5.4.5 Resignation Notice and Transition:** In the event of a voluntary resignation, the outgoing Council member must provide at least thirty (30) days' written notice to the Chairperson and Secretary. Following the election or appointment of their successor, the outgoing member is required to facilitate a smooth handover by training their replacement and transferring all relevant institutional data, access credentials, and documentation within this 30-day period.

6. Amendments to the Constitution

- **6.1** Amendments to this Constitution require a sixty percent (60%) majority vote from participating Full Members at the Virtual Biennial Meeting.
- **6.2** A quorum of at least fifty percent (50%) of registered Full Members must be present (either virtually or by proxy/electronic ballot) for the meeting to proceed with constitutional amendments or elections.
- **6.3** Constitutional amendment proposals must be submitted in writing to the Council at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting to be tabled during official roundtable discussions.

- **6.4** In case of a dispute over the interpretation of constitutional clauses, the Council may issue an interim ruling, which must be reviewed and ratified at the subsequent Biennial Meeting.

7. Dissolution

- **7.1** The dissolution of the APSC and/or APSS must be proposed either by a unanimous vote of the Council or through a petition signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of Full Members.
- **7.2** The dissolution resolution must be supported by at least a sixty percent (60%) majority of voting Full Members via an electronic ballot or during the Biennial Meeting.
- **7.3** Upon dissolution, any remaining funds, digital infrastructure, or physical assets will be allocated to a partner African educational institution or paleoscientific non-profit organization agreed upon by final Council consensus.

Ratification Note: This Constitution was formally ratified by the African Paleosciences Student Council on **27 July 2026** and represents the sovereign guiding framework of the African Paleosciences Student Society.

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Ms. Nompumelelo Maringa

Dr. Seminew Asrat

Ms. Penina Emanuel Kadalida

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Ms. Mariam Gichan