



Greater Austin Nepali Society (GANS)

BYLAWS

Bylaws Approved or Amended:

1. First Convention – February 15, 2015
 2. Second Convention – January 15, 2017 (First Amendment)
 3. Third Convention – February 10, 2019 (Second Amendment)
 4. Fourth Convention – May 16, 2021 (Third Amendment)
 5. Eighth Annual General Assembly – September 25, 2022 (Fourth Amendment)
 6. Tenth Annual General Assembly (Bylaws Convention) – May 4, 2025 (Election on June 15) (Fifth Amendment)
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Preamble

We, the Nepali residents in and around Austin, Texas, USA:

1. To uphold the distinct identity of our community;
2. To preserve and promote the Nepali language, literature, art, and culture while advancing community interests through various social activities;
3. To strengthen mutual brotherhood and social unity by respecting individual freedom and equality, without any discrimination based on gender, religion, region, caste, or political belief;
4. To foster peaceful coexistence, cultural exchange, and brotherly relations with other Nepali or non-Nepali communities and their respective cultures—

Formed this non-profit, purely social organization, the **Greater Austin Nepali Society (GANS)**, on September 15, 2013, and registered it under the U.S. law as a 501(c)(3) entity. These bylaws, officially passed through the organization's official convention, will govern the lawful operation of the organization.

Definitions

Unless the context implies otherwise, the terms used in these bylaws refer to:

1. **GANS:** Refers to Greater Austin Nepali Society.
2. **GANCS:** Refers to the Greater Austin Nepali Community and Spiritual Center — a permanent project or property owned by GANS.
3. **Organization:** Refers to Greater Austin Nepali Society.
4. **Bylaws:** The primary legal document ratified by the GANS Bylaws Convention or an official body, applicable to all members and the organization.
5. **Donor:** Any person, group, or institution offering financial or material support unconditionally and legally.
6. **Trustee:** Any individual, family, or group who meets a certain donation threshold and applies per guidelines to be approved by the official body.
7. **Trustee Member:** An eligible member from within a Trustee family who qualifies for GANS membership.
8. **Member:** Includes General Members, Life Members, and Trustee Members, as approved under GANS Bylaws.
9. **Nepali:** Refers to all people of Nepali origin or Nepali-speaking individuals residing in the Greater Austin area, regardless of their country of origin or citizenship.
10. **Greater Austin Area:** Refers to GANS's designated service area, including Austin and the following 19 counties: Travis, Hays, Williamson, Bastrop, Caldwell, Bell, Burnet, Blanco, Coryell, Lampasas, Lee, Llano, Fayette, Milam, Comal, McLennan, Gonzales, San Saba, and Washington.



Part 1: Name of the Organization

The name of the organization shall be **Greater Austin Nepali Society**, abbreviated as **GANS**.

Part 2: Logo of the Organization



The logo represents the identity and prestige of the organization. The colors—blue, red, and white—hold significance from the flags of Nepal and the United States. The star symbolizes the Texas state flag. The design includes Nepal's moon and sun symbols, national flag colors, and a map of Nepal.

Part 3: Membership

(a) Eligibility

- Nepali individuals aged 18 or older residing in the Greater Austin area who agree with the Bylaws, objectives, and U.S. laws can apply.
- Membership is valid only after submission of the official form and approval.
- A Texas ID or recognized photo ID, along with proof of eligibility, is mandatory.

(b) Types of Membership

1. **General Member** – Valid for one term; renewal required each term.
2. **Life Member** – No renewal required after one-time approval meeting criteria.
3. **Trustee Member** – Eligible members within a Trustee family or upgraded from Life Member.

(c) Membership Fees

- General Membership: \$100 per term.
- A donation of \$350 or more to the Community & Spiritual Center project waives the regular fee; otherwise, one must pay \$350 to qualify as Life/Trustee Member per rules.
- Existing Life or Trustee Members are unaffected by new rules.

(d) Rights and Limitations

- All members may vote. Only Trustee Members may run or be nominated for leadership roles. Other members may serve on subcommittees or departments.

(e) Leadership Eligibility

1. **President** – Must be a Trustee Member with at least one term of experience. Incomplete terms are not valid.
2. **BoT Chair/Vice-Chair** – Must be Golden Trustee or higher with two terms of experience.
3. **Executive or BoT Candidate** – Must be a Trustee Member.
4. Individuals expelled for disciplinary reasons or with unresolved or criminal charges are disqualified.
5. In compliance with IRS 501(c)(3) rules, no direct/indirect involvement in political campaigns is allowed. Members engaged in political executive committees are ineligible to lead GANS unless politically inactive for at least one year.

(f) Membership Termination

Membership may be terminated due to: death, relocation, voluntary resignation, falsified information, criminal conviction, or institutional disciplinary decision.

Part 4: Trustees

- A family within three generations living in the same household qualifies as a Trustee family.
- No separate eligibility is required; interested donors may apply using the prescribed form.
- Trustee *membership* is different from Trustee *donor* status. Only qualifying family members who fulfill GANS member criteria gain voting and candidacy rights.

Trustee Levels

1. **Silver Trustee** – Minimum donation: \$5,000
2. **Golden Trustee** – Minimum donation: \$10,000
3. **Platinum Trustee** – Minimum donation: \$25,000
4. **Diamond Trustee** – Minimum donation: \$50,000
5. **Wall of Honor Trustee (Highly Honored)** – Minimum donation: \$100,000

Clarifications:

- Existing Life and Trustee Members are unaffected by new rules.
- Past donors of \$3,400 are founding Trustees and highly valued.
- Diamond and higher-level donors are designated as **Patrons**.

Part 5: Greater Austin Nepali Community and Spiritual Center

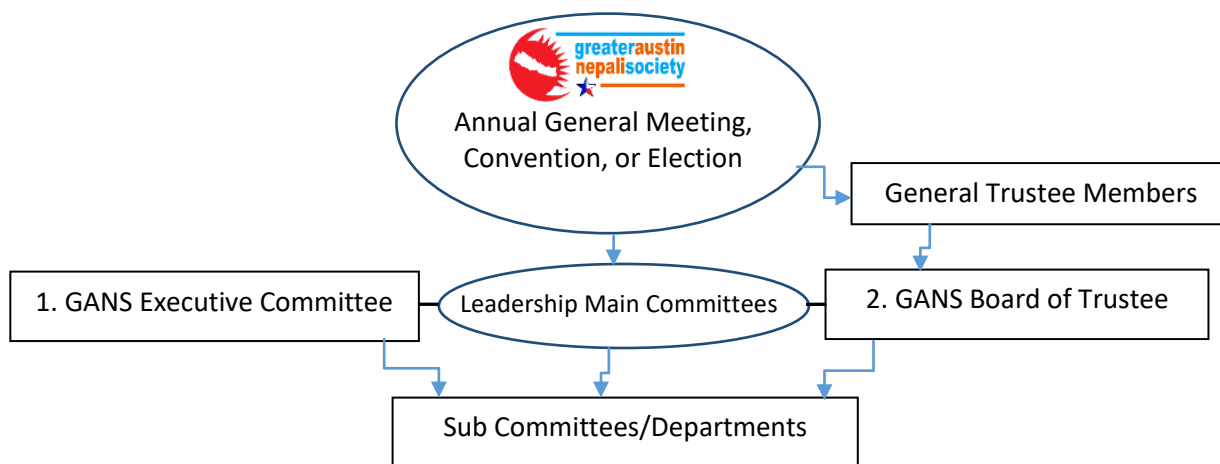
The Greater Austin Nepali Community and Spiritual Center is a permanent project operated by GANS and built on its own property. GANS is the name of the organization, and GANCSC is a project owned by GANS. It can also be referred to in short as the GANS Community Center.

GANS initiated this project with the aim of preserving the Nepali language and culture, embracing the entire community, and assisting with their various problems and needs, especially in times of difficulty. The center aims to create a well-organized space for all social activities. This includes the construction of a community house or center featuring symbols of Nepalese cultural identity such as replicas of the Pashupatinath and Buddhist temples, a yoga practice center, spaces for various essential activities, sports, recreation, a party hall, and a park—all as part of the community center.

The leadership for the purchase, construction, improvement, and operation of this center will be carried out by the GANS Board of Trustees and its subcommittees. The logo below represents this very project of GANS.



Part 6: Organizational Structure of the Organization



1. GANS has two primary leadership bodies: the **Executive Committee** and the **Board of Trustee**, which jointly operate the organization.

2. **Three levels of responsibility division:**
 - **Executive Committee’s scope:** All programs aimed at supporting the Nepali community by representing them and standing with them in their joys and sorrows.
 - **Board of Trustees’ scope:** Tasks related to the purchase, construction, renovation, and management of the GANS Community and Spiritual Center.
 - **Joint scope:** Matters of common interest such as the annual general meeting, bylaws, finances, and festivals.
 3. Certain key decisions of the organization must be made through joint meetings. The respective areas of responsibility for each committee are clearly outlined below and serve as the basis for determining which committee—or a joint meeting—should address any given issue. Committees may make independent decisions only in clearly defined areas. Both committees will be jointly accountable for any decisions made in joint meetings. If any decision made independently by a committee becomes controversial, a joint meeting must be called to resolve the matter collectively.
 4. **Chairing Joint Meetings:**

Joint meetings will be chaired by the **Chair of the Board of Trustees**, and **conducted by the GANS President** (Member Secretary of the Board of Trustees). Occasionally, a subcommittee, the Executive Committee, or the Board of Trustees may invite any or all members of the other committee to attend a meeting for the purpose of receiving advice or assistance. In such cases, the organizer of the meeting will chair the session, and the invitees will attend as guests. Such meetings are **not considered joint meetings**.
 5. **Coordination Requirement:**

Strong coordination and mutual understanding between the GANS President and the Chair of the Board of Trustees—and between their respective committees—is essential. Some subcommittees may be formed by a decision of the joint meeting and will remain under the authority of that joint body.
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Part 7: GANS Leadership Formation Process

The leadership will be selected through a **direct election process during the convention held in May every three years**.

1. **Executive Committee:**

The following 11 members will be elected from the general GANS membership (including general, life, and trustee members):

 - President and Board of Trustees Member Secretary (1)
 - Senior Vice President and Board of Trustees Member (1)
 - Women’s Vice President and Board of Trustees Member (1)
 - Vice President and Board of Trustees Member (1)
 - General Secretary and Board of Trustees Assistant Secretary (1)
 - Secretary and Board of Trustees Member (1)
 - Treasurer and Board of Trustees Member (1)
 - Members and Board of Trustees Members (4)

The Executive Committee may nominate up to 6 additional members if needed, making the committee up to **17 members** in total.

2. **Board of Trustees:**

8 members will be elected by the general trustee members:

- Chair (1)
- Vice Chair (1)
- Members (6)

Thus, **11 members** are elected by the general membership and **8 by trustee members**, making a total of **19 members** in the Board of Trustees. The Board may nominate up to 6 additional members as needed, bringing the total up to **25 members**.

3. **Election Process:**

Elections for the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees will be held **on the same day**, using **two separate ballots from a single election line**. A **minimum of 10 hours of voting time** must be ensured to make it convenient for all members.

4. **Key Responsibilities of Officers** (unless specifically designated otherwise):

- **President / Chair:** Planning, chairing meetings, and coordination
- **Vice President / Vice Chair:** Assisting the President or Chair, taking over responsibilities in their absence
- **General Secretary / Member Secretary:** Implementing decisions, maintaining records
- **Secretary / Assistant Secretary:** Assisting in secretarial duties
- **Treasurer / Financial Head:** Transparent financial management and reporting
- **Members:** Supporting the success of policies and programs

Part 8: Subcommittees and Departments

1. A subcommittee or department is a conducive space for working effectively on a specific area of interest and for developing leadership. It serves as a good platform to support the organization or society efficiently. The committee can make its tasks easier and more effective through subcommittees or departments. These bodies can also foster democratic practices and broad participation by including as many community members as possible.
2. The Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees, and the Joint GANS Team are the primary leadership bodies. Each of these three levels of leadership can, within their respective areas of responsibility, establish or expand subcommittees or departments as needed. They may appoint a coordinator or head from among the committee members based on necessity and availability.
3. Subcommittees or departments operate under their respective parent committees and are intended to assist with related departmental tasks. Their main role is to prepare agendas or provide suggestions to aid decision-making by the parent committee and to support the implementation of those decisions.

4. The head and deputy head of any subcommittee must be trustee members. Other members may be general or life members.
 5. In temple-related committees, non-Nepali supporting members may be included based on shared beliefs (however, the head and deputy head must be trustee members).
 6. If the predefined subcommittees or departments are deemed insufficient for organizing the work of a committee, additional ones may be created through a formal meeting decision.
 7. If a local group or organization is already working in a specific area, GANS must avoid becoming a competitor or obstacle. Instead, efforts should be made to coordinate, participate in, or support the work. After the primary committee assigns a lead for a specific topic, that person must either expand the subcommittee/department or collaborate with existing similar organizations to carry out the work.
 8. Generally, all major work of the primary committees should proceed through their respective subcommittees.
 9. No one should interfere in the operational domain of a subcommittee. However, if a subcommittee is inactive, its responsibilities fall to the main leadership. The leadership cannot use the inactivity of a subcommittee as an excuse to delay or avoid responsibilities. All members of the Executive Committee or Board of Trustees must take responsibility for the institution, even beyond their assigned roles when necessary.
 10. Typically, any program will be organized by the main bodies: the Executive Committee or the Board of Trustees. However, in special circumstances and with the consent of the main committee, a department or subcommittee may also independently organize a program.
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Part 8 (A): Departments Under the GANS Executive Committee

1. **Sports and Extracurricular Activities Department**
This department is responsible for regularly organizing sports and other extracurricular activities. While conducting these programs, the department should aim to ensure that the events generate some financial benefit for GANS rather than being a financial burden.
 2. **Nepali Language School Department**
This department plays a key role in teaching our mother tongue, Nepali, to future generations and transferring good Nepali culture to the second generation.
 3. **Social Service and Charity Department**
Helping people in times of hardship is an important duty of GANS. The organization will perform humanitarian service through this department. A separate charitable fund will be operated with distinct accounting. Bylaws may be created to strengthen and properly utilize this fund.
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Part 8 (B): Subcommittees Under the GANS Board of Trustees

1. Engineering and Technical Committee

This subcommittee handles all construction-related planning, including legal procedures and design. It initiates the process of construction and renovation, assesses feasibility for projects envisioned by leadership, and helps move them toward implementation.

2. Community and Spiritual Center Management Committee

This subcommittee oversees maintenance, cleanliness, care, and rental management of the community buildings, temple, garden, and parking areas within the center. It aims to make the center a source of revenue. Since it coordinates with the Finance Committee, the head of this subcommittee will be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee, and vice versa. It will work on making the center attractive and well-equipped.

3. Temple worshipping Management Committee

This subcommittee manages the appointment of priests, regular and special worships, festival-related events, opening and closing of the temple, cleanliness, and security.

Part 8 (C): Subcommittees Under the Joint Working Areas

1. Bylaws and Discipline Committee

(a) Formation and Role

1. The joint meeting of the GANS's Core Leadership Committee, which includes the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees, shall appoint a chairperson and form the GANS's Bylaws and Discipline Committee. The responsibilities of this committee include the study, interpretation, implementation of the bylaws, dispute resolution, complaint investigation, and maintaining discipline. The role of the committee will be significant when amendments to the constitution are required.
2. If any disputes arise related to the existing constitution, the final decision will be made by the joint meeting of the GANS's Core Leadership Committee, i.e., the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees, with the support of the Bylaws and Discipline Committee. The actions or decisions of the Bylaws Committee must be approved by the joint meeting.

(b) Rules of Discipline

1. Members must act in favor of GANS's dignity, the essence of the constitution, social welfare, and unity. Factions or groupings that negatively affect the organization should not be formed.
2. If a complaint or formal information is received, the committee will take steps to resolve it.
3. The committee will only recommend disciplinary actions; the final decision will be made by the joint meeting.

4. Internal organizational matters of GANS should not be disclosed publicly in a way that harms the organization's reputation and dignity.
5. Any concerns or suggestions should only be discussed between the relevant parties, and any disputes should be resolved internally through discussion and agreement or organizational decisions.
6. Decisions made according to constitutional procedures will be binding on everyone, even if they were not present at the meeting or disagree with the decision. However, there will always be an option to reopen the matter in future meetings for reconsideration or new decisions.

(c) Forms of Possible Disciplinary Actions and Procedures

1. Disciplinary actions may include expulsion, suspension of membership for a specified period, cancellation of membership, or disqualification from membership.
2. If any criminal activities threaten the safety of the Nepali community or the organization, the issue will be resolved according to American laws.
3. If a person subject to disciplinary action expresses a desire to amend their behavior, the committee may reconsider the decision after an investigation and a 3-month probation period. After the review, the joint meeting of the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees, based on the recommendations of the Bylaws and Discipline Committee, may lift the disciplinary action.
4. Before taking any disciplinary action, an individual must first be personally reminded in a respectful manner. Afterward, they should be given a written opportunity to clarify or correct their behavior within a set timeframe. If the explanation is not received or is unsatisfactory, the joint meeting will take disciplinary action based on the recommendation of the Bylaws and Discipline Committee. No action can be taken without following this process.

(d) Bylaws Amendment Process

1. If amendments to the Bylaws are necessary, the joint meeting of GANS's Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees will decide and direct the Bylaws Committee at least 6 months before the annual general meeting or conference to prepare for the proposal.
2. The Bylaws Committee will prepare a report on the proposed amendments and submit it to the GANS's Core Leadership Committee within 3 months. Afterward, the joint meeting of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee, including the Constitution Committee, will discuss the draft of the constitution and make a decision. The proposed amendments should be publicly discussed in the community for at least 2 months before being finalized and presented at the conference. The final proposed draft will be approved in the conference and the new constitution will come into effect.
3. A board of up to 7 members, including the head of the Board of Trustees, the GANS President, and the Chief of the Bylaws Committee, will be formed to lead the conference. This decision will be made by the joint meeting of the relevant committees.
4. Decisions on approval of the new bylaws or any issue during the conference can be made by a majority vote of those present in the hall. If necessary, the issues of disagreement

can be separated and a separate voting procedure will be followed. A minimum of one month will be given for campaigning, with at least 10 hours of voting time for direct voting. Until then, the old constitution will remain in effect.

5. Old decisions or actions taken based on the old constitution will not be affected by the new bylaws or amendments.
6. If the constitution does not clarify a matter, the committee may make decisions that are consistent with the organization's principles and not contrary to the bylaws.

(e) Protection of Founding Principles in the Bylaws

1. When amending GANS's current bylaws, no proposals listed in the preamble of the bylaws should be modified, added, or changed unless they are in accordance with the law. In other words, the founding principles should remain unchanged.
 2. No clauses should be included in the bylaws that contradict the spirit of the preamble. The bylaws must ensure that the objectives and spirit of the founding principles are adhered to, and no interpretation should be made against the intent of the preamble.
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2. Finance Committee

Headed by the Board's Finance Lead and assisted by the Executive Committee Treasurer as Deputy, this committee is formed to assist in fundraising and financial management. People with internal audit skills should be sought for inclusion.

(a) Responsibilities:

1. Fundraising, creating financial plans, maintaining accounts, and ensuring regular audits.
2. Publishing financial updates every three months transparently on the GANS website.
3. Conducting an annual audit of accounts.
4. Updating financial status in every possible meeting and approving expenses post-completion for recording.
5. The main leadership may create financial policies upon this committee's recommendation regarding expenditures and construction contracts.
6. Qualified volunteers may be assigned internal audit responsibilities during the AGA.

(b) Expense Rules:

1. The Executive Committee's accounts and bank accounts will be handled separately under the Treasurer. The Board's Finance Lead oversees the Community and Spiritual Center's finances. Separate accounts and reports are required.
2. Donations designated for the Community and Spiritual Center cannot be used for routine operations. These must go toward purchase, construction, repair, or loan payments.
3. The Executive Committee must maintain a separate charity fund. The Board must keep a separate account for donations, collection boxes, rent, and other income. This is called

the *Additional Income Fund*. All joint activity incomes and expenses will go through this fund. Operational expenses like salaries, utilities, and maintenance will also come from this fund. Revenues like Deusi-Bhailo or general membership fees will also be deposited here and used accordingly.

3. Arts and Culture Committee

The joint leadership will appoint a Chair and Deputy Chair from the Board. This committee must promote Nepal as a garden of diverse cultures and represent the full spectrum of Nepali traditions within GANS. It will coordinate and uplift various cultural groups, organize museum and festival celebrations, and manage costumes, instruments, sound systems, and artists for events.

4. Information and Communication Committee

The joint leadership will appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair from the Board. This committee manages information dissemination, promotion, and record-keeping. It also handles website, social media, email, and other online operations.

5. Volunteer Management Committee

This committee plays a vital role in mobilizing volunteers wherever needed and should be ready to deploy support effectively.

6. Advisory Committee

The joint leadership may form this committee by including respected community leaders. It aims to align everyone with the goals of GANS, build a sense of belonging, and unite the community under one GANS umbrella.

Part 9: Trustee Member's Meeting

A meeting of GANS Trustee members must be organized at least once a year. This meeting will approve important decisions related to the community and spiritual center and will provide

policy directions. Additionally, special plans may be developed to enhance the effectiveness of the center's operations. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for organizing this meeting.

Part 10: Annual General Assembly, Convention, or Conference

(a) Definition

1. An empowered gathering that all members (general, lifetime, and trustees) have the right to attend shall be organized annually as the *Annual General Assembly*. Every three years, a convention including leadership elections shall be conducted. The General Assembly, convention, or election shall be considered the highest authority of the organization.
 2. The date, agenda, and discussion points of the General Assembly or Convention must be determined through a joint meeting of the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees. A notice must be made public at least two months in advance for a General Assembly, four months for a convention (election), and six months for a constitutional convention. On the day of the election, at least 10 hours of voting time must be provided from morning to evening to accommodate all members.
 3. During each General Assembly or Convention, reports including financial statements, activity progress, and future plans must be presented and approved on behalf of both the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees. These reports must be endorsed by each respective committee's meeting before being submitted to the convention.
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(b) Election Commission

1. For the GANS convention (election) held every three years in May, an Election Commission of up to 7 members shall be formed by a joint decision of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees. This commission must be approved at the Annual General Assembly preceding the election. However, the commission will not officially begin its work or announce the date of the convention until four months prior to the event.
2. The responsibility of the Election Commission shall be to conduct a free and fair election to establish the new leadership of GANS and to conduct the closed session of the convention. The Commission shall operate independently and with full authority in its decision-making.
3. Until the current leadership committees are officially dissolved in the convention hall, all existing committees will continue to function as usual. The Election Commission must publish the election schedule at least three months in advance.
4. The membership registration process must be made simple and accessible through both online and paper forms. After the election date is announced, members must be notified to complete registration within one month. Membership registration will be closed thereafter until the election is completed.

5. No candidate may campaign based on caste, region, religion, or political ideology, nor may they personally attack others. Candidates are also prohibited from forming groups for campaigning that include non-candidates. The Election Commission may establish additional procedures and a code of conduct for the election.
 6. In case of any dispute regarding the actions or decisions of the Election Commission, a joint meeting of the Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, and the Constitutional Committee shall make the final decision.
 7. The convention will be conducted in two phases: an **Opening Session** and a **Closed Session**. Anyone may attend the opening session, but the closed session is reserved for members only—though the organizers may decide otherwise. The Election Commission shall chair and conduct the closed session. After the reports are approved during the closed session, the Election Commission shall announce the newly elected leadership, administer the oath of office, and distribute certificates.
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(c) Oath of Office

The main leadership bodies of GANS—the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees—must take the following oath of office and confidentiality:

"I, (Name), in the presence of God and the Nepali community, hereby take this oath that, while holding the honorable position of a member of the Executive Committee/Board of Trustees of the Greater Austin Nepali Society, an organization committed to the sacred purpose of social service, I shall never engage in any activity contrary to the constitution and spirit of this organization. I pledge to remain disciplined within the organization, to rise above any personal or factional interests, and to always focus my efforts and contributions on the rights and welfare of this organization and the broader Nepali community."

Part 11: Meeting Procedures and Committee Protocol

1. Each committee must hold at least one meeting every three months. A trustee assembly must be held at least once a year, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) once a year, and the Convention every three years. Online meetings shall not be counted under this provision. In special circumstances that prevent holding the convention on time, it may be postponed by a maximum of six months.
2. For the meetings of GANS leadership committees to be valid, more than 50% of the total members must be physically present. Proxy attendance will not be counted. If any decisions are made without a quorum, those decisions must be later ratified in a formally convened meeting. For trustee assemblies, AGMs, and conventions, as long as appropriate notice and publicity have been provided in a timely manner, the number of

attendees present will be considered valid. For critical decisions, a direct voting process may be scheduled for the following day, which must remain open for at least 10 hours.

3. Any official or member who is absent from meetings three times without valid reason or fails to adhere to the organization's code of conduct may be dismissed by the decision of the concerned committee, and their position may be refilled accordingly.

Part 12: GANS' Relationship with Other Organizations

GANS members are allowed to establish or participate in other clubs or social organizations as long as it does not disrupt social unity or the collective interest. The GANS leadership must adopt a cooperative and collaborative approach toward such organizations. Regular dialogue and coordination will be necessary. If issues arise, efforts must be made to resolve them promptly through discussion.

GANS will treat all social organizations established within its working area as part of its extended family.

Furthermore, GANS can establish fraternal relations with neighboring organizations that share similar social goals, allowing collaboration for mutual benefit.

Any program organized by GANS will be considered a community-wide event for all Greater Austin residents. Organizations formed within the GANS area may coordinate with GANS to list their own programs as "sponsored by" or "in collaboration with" GANS and may use the GANS logo with permission.

Thank you.