

Constitution

Article I Name, Mission Statement, and Purposes

- Section A.** The name of this organization shall be the Independence FFA Chapter. The letters “FFA” will be used to designate the chapter, its activities, and its members.
- Section B.** The Mission of Independence FFA is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.
- Section C.** The purpose for which this chapter is formed is as follows:
- 1) To develop agricultural leadership skills among all members.
 - 2) To develop a global awareness of agriculture.
 - 3) To bestow confidence among agricultural students and agricultural work.
 - 4) To promote agriculture career opportunities through hands-on training.
 - 5) To develop competencies in communication, human relations, and social abilities.
 - 6) To build cooperative attitudes among agricultural students.
 - 7) To encourage improvement in scholastics.
 - 8) To provide organized recreational activities for agriculture students.

Article II Organization

- Section A.** The Independence FFA Chapter is a chartered local entity of the South Valley Section in the San Joaquin Region of the California Association, made up of local members.
- Section B.** This chapter accepts in full, the provision in the constitution and bylaws of the California Association of the Future Farmers of America as well as those of the National FFA Organization.

Article III Membership

- Section A.** Types of membership in this organization shall be of three kinds: (1) active; (2) alumni; and (3) honorary
- Section B.** Active Membership: Students who are enrolled in agriculture education courses at Independence High School are entitled to become active members of the Independence FFA Chapter. To retain active membership while in high school, a student must be regularly enrolled in an agriculture education course each year.
- Section C.** Alumni Membership: Membership shall be open to any person who has formerly been in an agriculture education program, current or former agricultural educators, parents of current or former FFA members, and others interested in and supporting the FFA.

Section D. Honorary Membership: Supervisors, school superintendents, principals, members of boards of education, instructors, teachers of agriculture, businessmen, farmers, and others who are helping to advance agriculture education and the FFA, and who have rendered outstanding service, may be elected to honorary membership by a majority vote of the members present at any regular meeting or conference.

Honorary membership shall be limited to the Honorary Chapter FFA Degree in the Independence FFA chapter.

Section E. Independence FFA is a 100% affiliated chapter with every student becoming a member of the FFA when they enroll in an agriculture class. Membership shall be paid for by the Independence FFA chapter.

Section F. No student may participate in any FFA activities unless they are members in good standing with the FFA. To be in good standing with FFA a student must not have an outstanding balance with the Independence High School finance office, and their name must not appear on the ineligible list.

Section G. The FFA advisors at their own discretion have the right to dismiss any members from the FFA organization at any time with approval of the administration.

Section H. The regular work of this chapter shall be carried on by the active membership.

Article IV Active Membership Degrees and Privileges

Section A. There shall be four degrees of active membership based upon achievement. They are: (1) Greenhand FFA Degree, (2) Chapter FFA Degree, (3) State FFA Degree, (4) American FFA Degree. The national organization shall set the minimum qualifications for the degrees.

Section B. Greenhand FFA Degree: On meeting the following minimum qualifications, the Greenhand FFA Degree will be conferred by the Independence FFA Chapter:

1. Be enrolled in agricultural education and have satisfactory plans for a Supervised Agricultural Experience Program.
2. Learn and explain the FFA Creed, Motto, and Salute, and Mission Statement.
3. Describe and explain the meaning of the FFA emblem, colors, and symbols.
4. Explain proper use of the FFA jacket.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of history of the organization, chapter constitution and bylaws and the chapter Program of Activities.
6. Know the duties and responsibilities of FFA members.
7. Have access to the Official FFA Manual and the FFA Student Handbook.
8. Submit a written application for the Greenhand FFA Degree.

Section C. Chapter FFA Degree: On meeting the following minimum qualifications, the Chapter FFA Degree will be conferred by the Independence FFA Chapter:

1. Must have held the Greenhand FFA Degree for at least one complete semester of instruction and have a record of satisfactory participation in the activities of the Independence FFA Chapter.
2. Must have completed at least one year of systematic instruction in agriculture education, be enrolled in their second year of agricultural education and have an approved Supervised Agricultural Experience Program.
3. Be familiar with the state association and national organization.
4. Be familiar with the purposes and programs of the local FFA chapter.
5. Be familiar with Parliamentary Procedure.
6. Have effectively led a group discussion for fifteen minutes.
7. Have earned at least \$150.00 or worked at least 100 hours and have developed plans for the growth of their SAEP.
8. Have a 2.0 scholastic record in an agricultural education course.
9. Submit a written application for the Chapter FFA Degree.

Section D. State FFA Degree: The qualifications for the State FFA Degree shall be those set forth in the California FFA Constitution. The Independence FFA Chapter shall recommend only those applicants for the State FFA Degree which meet all qualifications set forth in the State FFA Constitution at the time of the making application. Qualifications for the State FFA Degree shall be upheld by the Independence FFA Chapter.

Section E. American FFA Degree: The qualifications for the American FFA Degree shall be those set forth in the National FFA Constitution. The Independence FFA Chapter shall recommend only those applicants to the California Association Future Farmers of America for the American FFA Degree which meet all qualifications set forth in the National FFA Constitution at the time of making the application.

Section F. A record of all Greenhand FFA and Chapter FFA initiations shall be held by the Independence FFA Chapter.

Section G. Only members who have been elected to the Greenhand FFA Degree may hold chapter office.

Section H. Chapter Advisors shall review the qualifications of members and make recommendations to the chapter concerning degree advancement for the Greenhand and Chapter FFA Degrees.

Article V Officers

- Section A.** The elected officers of the Independence FFA Chapter shall be (1) president, (2) 1st vice president, (3) 2nd vice president, (4) secretary, (5) treasurer, (6) reporter, (7) sentinel, and (8) Historian.
- Section B.** The Advisors of the Independence FFA Chapter may elect to reduce the number of officers elected by putting the Second Vice President and Historian on an inactive status. The chapter officer team may have no less than six and no more than eight officers elected at one time.
- Section C.** All elective chapter officers shall hold office for one year after election, or until their successors are elected, unless removed from office for cause by the Chapter Advisors. All vacancies may be filled by appointing the candidate with the next highest tabulated overall score.

Article VI Meetings

Independence FFA will hold regular meetings at least once each month during the regular school year.

Article VII Uniform

The uniform and degrees worn by all members of the Independence FFA Chapter shall be that which is outlined by the California Association, Future Farmers of America.

Article VIII Procedure

Parliamentary Procedure in all meetings of Independence FFA shall be in accordance with the latest version of Robert's Rules of Order.

Article IX Amendments

Amendments to the constitution or by-laws shall be submitted in writing 30 days prior to a regular meeting of the chapter. Amendments will be reviewed by the executive committee and put forth to the chapter membership at least 10 days prior to the meeting at which the amendment will be discussed. Amendments to the constitution or by-laws may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the regular meeting.

By-Laws

Article I Chapter Officers

Section A. Elections:

- (1) Election of chapter officers shall consist of four parts:
 - a. Application: Advisor(s) of the Independence FFA chapter shall produce an application, supporting materials, and a scoring rubric each year. Applications shall be blindly scored by all nominating committee members using the accompanying scoring rubric. The advisor(s) shall collect the scores from the nominating committee and calculate the average for each candidate.
 - b. Interview: Advisor(s) of the Independence FFA chapter shall produce interview materials and a scoring rubric each year. Interviews shall be scored by the nominating committee using the accompanying scoring rubric. The advisor(s) shall collect the scores from the nominating committee and calculate average for each candidate.
 - c. Test: Advisor(s) of the Independence FFA Chapter shall produce a knowledge test pertaining to FFA knowledge chapter information. The test shall be scored by the chapter advisor(s),
 - d. Votes Received: Each candidate shall record a video to be shown to the chapter membership, the content of the video shall be up to the discretion of the nominating committee. Voting shall be done by secret ballot. Advisor(s) shall count all ballots.
- (2) A ballot of twelve (sixteen if all offices are active) candidates shall be determined by adding together the application score, interview score, and test score. The candidates with the top twelve (sixteen) scores shall be placed on the ballot.
- (3) Chapter officers will be elected by adding together the application score, interview score, test score, and votes received. The candidates with the top six (eight) scores shall be elected to chapter office.
- (4) To run for chapter office candidates must meet the following minimum qualifications:
 - a. Have and maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher, with C's or better in all Agriculture classes.
 - b. Have and maintain a clean discipline and attendance record.
 - c. Be able to attend the summer Chapter Officer Retreat.
 - d. Be able to attend all activities listed under the required activities section on the officer application.
 - e. Have a signed, completed application on file with the chapter advisors.
 - f. Have a signed, completed chapter Code of Ethics on file with the chapter advisor.
 - g. Be enrolled in Agriculture Communications for the following year.
 - h. Be a member of the local FFA chapter for the current school year.

- (5) Members seeking candidacy for chapter office must submit to the chapter advisor(s), by the specified due date, an application to run for office which is signed by the member's parent or guardian indicating their approval and support of the member's candidacy. Should the application not be submitted on or before the specified due date, the member shall not be allowed to run for chapter office.
- (6) Candidates may not be nominated from the floor. If nominated for a specific office by the nominating committee, a candidate may decline the nomination for the office. The candidate who declines the office for which he/she was nominated by the committee has no right to seek nomination for any other office.

Section B. Duties and Responsibilities:

- (1) President
 - a. Preside over meetings according to accepted rules of parliamentary procedure.
 - b. Appoint committees and serve on them as an ex-officio, nonvoting member.
 - c. Coordinate the activities of the chapter and evaluate the progress of each division of the POA.
 - d. Represent the chapter in public relations and official functions.
- (2) Vice President (1st and 2nd)
 - a. Assume all duties of the president, if necessary.
 - b. Develop the POA, and serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the POA committees.
 - c. Coordinate all committee work.
 - d. Work closely with the president and advisor to assess progress toward meeting chapter goals.
- (3) Secretary
 - a. Prepare and post the agenda for each chapter meeting.
 - b. Prepare and present the minutes for each chapter meeting.
 - c. Place all committee reports in the secretary's file.
 - d. Be responsible for chapter correspondence.
 - e. Maintain member attendance and activity records.
 - f. Have on hand for each meeting
 - The secretary's file.
 - Copy of the POA, including special and standing committees.
 - Official FFA Manual and Official FFA Student Handbook.
 - Copy of the chapter constitution and bylaws.
- (4) Treasurer
 - a. Receive, record, and sign all deposit slips.
 - b. Present monthly treasurer reports at chapter meetings.
 - c. Maintain neat and accurate treasurer records.
 - d. Serve as chairperson of the finance or related committee.

(5) Reporter

- a. Serve as chair of the POA public relations or related committee.
- b. Plan public information programs local radio, television, newspaper, and service clubs and make use of other opportunities to tell the FFA story.
- c. Release news and information to local and regional news media.
- d. Publish a chapter newsletter or website.
- e. Send local stories to area, district, and state reporters and to any school publications.
- f. Send articles and photographs to FFA New Horizons and other national and regional publications and websites.
- g. Work with local media on radio and television appearances and FFA news.
- h. Serve as the chapter photographer.

(6) Sentinel

- a. Assist the president in maintaining order.
- b. Keep the meeting room, chapter equipment, and supplies in proper condition.
- c. Welcome guests and visitors.
- d. Keep the meeting room comfortable.
- e. Take charge of candidates for degree ceremonies.
- f. Assist with special features and refreshments.

(7) Historian

- a. Develop and maintain a scrapbook of memorabilia to record the chapter's history.
- b. Research and prepare items of significance of the chapter's history.
- c. Prepare displays of chapter activities and submit stories of former members to the media.
- d. Assist the reporter in providing photography for chapter needs.

(8) Advisor

- a. Supervise chapter activities year-round.
- b. Inform prospective students and parents about FFA.
- c. Instruct students in leadership and personal development.
- d. Build school and community support for the program.
- e. Encourage involvement of all chapter members in activities.
- f. Prepare students for involvement in career development events and leadership programs.
- g. Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.

Section C. Discipline:

- (1) Officer discipline shall be managed using a three-strike system at the discretion of the chapter advisor(s). Upon received a third strike the officer will be removed from office.

- (2) All chapter officers will be placed on a strike contract for any of the offences listed:
- a. Not abiding by the FFA Code of Ethics.
 - b. Unexcused absences; anything but illness or family emergency.
- (3) The following offences will result in immediate removal from office:
- a. Use and/or possession of alcohol or drugs.
 - b. Use and/or possession of tobacco.
 - c. Stealing or possession of stolen goods.
 - d. Use and/or possession of weapons illegally.
 - e. Defiance of advisor, administrator, or teacher.
 - f. Two consecutive grading periods below a 2.0 GPA.
 - g. Missing and activity on the required calendar.
 - h. Bullying of any kind.
 - i. Fighting.
- (4) Upon receiving a strike, the officer will receive written notice from the chapter advisor. The officer will also be required to meet with the chapter advisor(s) to discuss the motivations behind the strike.

Article II Committees

- Section A.** There shall be an executive committee consisting of the six (eight) current elected chapter officers and the chapter advisor(s). The executive committee is authorized to act in the name of the Independence FFA Chapter, subject only to such regulations and by-laws as may be adopted by the Independence FFA Chapter.
- Section B.** The executive committee shall be empowered to perform all business of the Independence FFA chapter.
- Section C.** Various special and standing committees may be appointed at the discretion of the executive committee. The chapter's mandatory committees are as follows: Campus Activities, Community Service, Greenhand, Healthy Lifestyles, Kindness and Gratitude, Membership, Nominating, Program of Activities, Promotion and Marketing. The Nominating Committee, however, shall not be governed by provisions of this section with regard to committee membership.
- Section D.** The nominating committee shall consist of four- six chapter members, with the retiring chapter president as chairperson and the chapter advisor(s) or his/her delegated representative as ex-officio member without vote. If the chapter president is not a graduating senior, they are unable to serve, the chairperson shall be the next highest ranking chapter officer on the committee or shall be elected by a majority vote if no officer is serving on the committee.

Each member of the nominating committee shall be selected by the chapter advisor(s) with consultation of any senior chapter officers. The application shall be prepared by the chapter advisor(s) and be made available to all chapter

members. The actual selection process shall be at the discretion of the chapter advisor(s). To be selected as a representative on the nominating committee a student must be a junior or senior, hold the State FFA Degree, and be in good standing.

The nominating committee shall, after consideration of the qualified candidates, nominate twelve (sixteen) candidates. Candidates shall not be nominated for a specific position, but rather their name added to the official ballot, positions shall be determined by overall score. Meetings of the nominating committee shall be closed meetings. Information given on all possible candidates shall be confidential.

Section E. The Campus Activities committee shall consist of members from the Independence FFA chapter, with the executive committee appointing the chairperson and the chapter advisor(s) as an ex-officio member. The committee shall work to coordinate activities on the Independence High School campus that work to promote and highlight FFA events and activities. If permissible, the committee shall co-organize an event with the officers of the Independence High School Associated Student Body.

Section F. The Community Service committee shall consist of members from the Independence FFA chapter, with the executive committee appointing the chairperson and the chapter advisor(s) as an ex-officio member. The committee shall work to coordinate community service activities for members of the Independence FFA chapter.

Section G. The Greenhand committee shall consist of members from the Independence FFA chapter, with the executive committee appointing the chairperson and the chapter advisor(s) as an ex-officio member. The committee shall work to organize activities for the freshmen members of the Independence FFA chapter.

Section H. The Healthy Lifestyles committee shall consist of members from the Independence FFA chapter, with the executive committee appointing the chairperson and the chapter advisor(s) as an ex-officio member. The committee shall coordinate the preparation of meals for chapter events and activities. The committee is also charged with organizing activities and events that promote healthy living.

Section I. The Kindness and Gratitude committee shall consist of members from the Independence FFA chapter, with the executive committee appointing the chairperson and the chapter advisor(s) as an ex-officio member. The committee shall work to recognize the contributions of individuals to the Independence FFA chapter.

Section J. The Membership committee shall consist of members from the Independence FFA chapter, with the executive committee appointing the chairperson and the chapter advisor(s) as an ex-officio member. The committee shall work to organize events and activities to strengthen the relationship between the Independence FFA chapter and its membership.

Section K. The Program of Activities committee shall consist of members from the Independence FFA chapter, with the executive committee appointing the chairperson and the chapter advisor(s) as an ex-officio member. The committee shall review the FFA chapter's program of activities and make recommendations for changes for the following year.

Section L. The Promotion and Marketing committee shall consist of members from the Independence FFA chapter, with the executive committee appointing the chairperson and the chapter advisor(s) as an ex-officio member. The committee shall work under the direction of the chapter reporter and/or historian to promote chapter activities, events, and programs.

Article III Eligibility

Section A. Chapter member eligibility to exhibit at fairs and shows will be dependent upon their completion of an exhibitor application and contract. Approval of the application and contract will be at the discretion of the chapter advisor(s).

Section B. To be eligible to participate in any activity at or above the chapter level the member must maintain a 2.0 or above.