

*The Student Government Association
Of Columbus State University
Constitution*



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STUDENT GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We, the students of Columbus State University, desiring a more representative and efficient student government, wanting better communication between students and the University's administration and faculty, seeking to cultivate and preserve the ideals of good citizenship, and to maintain a more complete and fruitful atmosphere of learning, do hereby establish this Constitution for Student Government.

Article I: Name

This organization shall be called the Student Government Association (SGA) of Columbus State University.

Article II: Objectives

1. To provide direct channels for responsible and effective participation in university governance.
2. To provide an official and representative organization to receive concerns, consider problems, and participate in making decisions affecting the University.
3. To support programs that may directly benefit students and the University.
4. To provide a means whereby students may gain experience and training in responsible political roles and leadership.
5. To review regulations and policies affecting the welfare of the University, and such other matters as it may maintain and promote the best interest of students.
6. To assist in the development of academic programs, co-curricular activities, and university policies which affect the student body.
7. To promote full understanding, communication, and cooperation between students, faculty, and administration.

Article III: The Sitting of the Senate

Section 1: Defining of the Sitting of the Senate

- I. The Senate is a group of elected or appointed persons that represent themselves and their constituents as well as the Executive Branch of the Student Government Association.
- II. The meeting that the SGA hosts will be known as the Sitting of the Senate.

Section 2: Membership

The Sitting of the Senate shall consist of the following three elements:

- I. The Executive Branch, which shall be composed of the President of the student body, Vice President, Treasurer, Speaker of the Senate, and Chief Justice.
- II. The voting Senate body shall consist of the following two components:
 - The Senators: 4 Senators will be elected to represent each college, including the Honors College. 1 senator will be elected to represent the graduate school, including 4 Senators for Residence Life, 2 senators for International Students, and 6 senators at Large
- III. The Judicial Branch shall consist of Judicial Council members.
 - The Chief Justice or an alternate Judicial Council member may serve as an advisor on constitutional matters during the Sitting of the Senate sessions at the request of the presiding executive officer.

Section 3: Qualifications

All members and members-elect of the Senate must have and maintain an enrollment status of at least part-time student as defined in the most recent edition of the University catalog. Summer term enrollment is an exception to this requirement. A minimum GPA of 2.0 for undergraduate students and 3.0 for graduate students must be maintained during each term of enrollment.

- If a Registered Student Organization (RSO) is not represented, then the organization may not gain any of the benefits of being in the Student Government Association.

Section 4: Voting rules for The Sitting of the Senate

- I. The President shall have a tie breaking vote.

- II. The Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and any members of the Judicial Branch may not be a voting member

Section 5: Removal Senate Members

The following are considered grounds for automatic removal from the Senate:

- I. Automatic Removals and Suspensions

- A. General.

1. Any Senate member whose GPA or enrollment status drops below the minimums defined in Article III, Section 2, or who is suspended from the University shall be automatically removed from membership in the Senate. The GPA and enrollment status of members of the Senate shall be confirmed at the beginning of each academic term.

- Automatic removals shall be officially recorded in the minutes of the first full Sitting of the Senate meeting of each academic term.

- B. Suspension of Campus Registered Student Organization from SGA.

1. To remain active in the SGA, an organization must have a representative attending at least 65% of The Sitting of the Senate sessions in an academic term. Failure of an organization to participate as so defined shall result in suspension of that organization from the SGA during the current and following academic term.

- Senators are allowed to miss only three meetings of the Sitting of the Senate. In the event that a Senator misses three meetings of The Sitting of the Senate, the third absence will trigger the suspension to take effect.
- A suspended organization will not be eligible to apply for or receive any grants, sponsorships, or other assistance from the SGA during the suspension period. Suspensions shall be officially recorded in the minutes of the first meeting of The Sitting of the Senate following the offense.

- C. Suspension of Class Representatives

- To remain active in SGA, a class representative must attend at least 65% of The Sitting of the Senate sessions in an academic term. Failure of an organization to participate as defined shall result in suspension of the class representative.

II. Other Removals

- A. The Sitting of the Senate may, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, remove a representative from the Senate for failure to fulfill their committee or project responsibilities.
 - D. Except for automatic removals because of GPA, enrollment status, or suspension from the University, the President, the Vice President, the Treasurer, Speaker of the Senate, Senators, the Chief Justice, and members of the Judicial Council, may only be removed by impeachment (see Article IX).

Section 6: Powers, Duties, Procedures

I. Powers and Duties

- A. The Sitting of the Senate shall have the power to recommend policies governing student life at Columbus State University and bylaws governing the Sitting of the Senate. The Sitting of the Senate shall require a majority (51%), quorum. Without a majority within the house, the recommendation or bylaw will fail.
- B. Each Senator shall serve on at least one (1) student/faculty committee if there are enough committees to be served on.
- C. All members of the Senate will have one (1) vote, and all votes will carry equal weight.

II. Procedures

- A. The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority.
- B. Quorum shall be established by The Sitting of the Senate present at that particular meeting; however, at no time shall there be less than ten (10) voting members. Executive Branch members shall not be counted as voting members.
- C. Any faculty member, administration official, or student may introduce a proposal.
- D. The Sitting of the Senate shall meet a minimum of six (6) sessions per academic term as follows: the full Sitting of the Senate shall meet at least four (4) times.

- The next academic term's meeting dates shall be established by the Executive Branch and made public no later than two (2) weeks prior to the end of each academic term.

Article IV: Responsibilities of Members of the Student Government Association

Section 1: The Executive Branch

- I. The Executive Branch shall be composed of the President of the student body, Vice President, Treasurer, Speaker of the Senate, Chief Justice, and Secretary.
- II. The President oversees the total operation and function of all executive officers of the SGA and committees; is responsible for working with the officers, judicial council, and chairpersons of those committees in initiating programs for their areas of concern; and shall exercise the following duties:
 - A. Preside over The Sitting of the Senate and act as a voting member only to break a tie.
 - B. Be the chief executive officer of the SGA and be responsible for the implementation of student government policies.
 - C. Serve as the official spokesperson and representative of the student body.
 - D. Chair the Executive Branch and have the power to veto any topic, recommendation, or subject brought up during the Executive Branch's meeting.
 - A two-thirds majority (2/3) of the Executive Branch's votes is required to override the veto.
 - E. Serve on the Alumni Council, Strategic Planning Commission, Student Activities Fee Committee, Technology Fee Advisory Committee, and other such committees as required by the University.
 - F. Act as a delegate to the Student Advisory Council and the Board of Regents.
 - G. Have the authority to sign purchase orders if the Treasurer is unable to do so.
 - H. Have a veto in the The Sitting of the Senate, which can be overridden by a two-thirds majority (2/3) vote of the members present.

- This veto can go towards any vote or motion that takes place during The Sitting of the Senate.
 - I. Assign University committees to the Vice President and Speaker as their primary areas of concern.
 - J. Has the power to create committees to serve the Executive Branch at their discretion in order to research or create solutions to problems concerning the student body.
- III. The Vice Presidents and Speakers are responsible for investigating, developing, overseeing, and initiating policies and programs in their areas of concern.
- IV. The Vice President shall:
 - A. Be responsible for formulating policies concerning academic areas that affect the student body, and for advising the Executive Branch and the Senate on all matters relative to the delegated areas of responsibility.
 - B. Chair any social and philanthropic projects within all of SGA.
 - C. Have the power to delegate responsibilities of the aforementioned events to other subordinate members of the Student Government Association, including the Executive Branch and the Senate.
 - D. Be responsible for any and all of the SGA's social media accounts.
 - E. Serve on committees as required by the University.
 - F. Oversee the work of all standing committees on which students serve within the Vice President's area.
- V. The Treasurer shall:
 - A. Prepare a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which shall be submitted to the Executive Branch and approved by the Executive Branch.
 - B. Be responsible for advising the Executive Branch and the Senate on all matters relative to the delegated area of responsibility.
 - C. Be responsible for keeping a record of approved and denied money requests to use as guidance for future money requests.

- D. Be responsible for overseeing all budget amendments and money requests.
- E. Oversee the work of all standing committees on which students serve within the Treasurer's area.
- F. Serve on committees as required by the University.
- G. Shall be responsible for all logistical affairs such as booking venues and completing eQuests.

VI. The Speaker of the Senate shall:

- A. Be responsible for accurately voicing the ideas and opinions of the Senators to the Executive Branch.
- B. The Speaker is further responsible for relaying information from the Executive Branch back to the Senators.
- C. Be responsible for establishing an attendance policy and meeting times for the Senators.
 - Must meet a minimum of ten (10) times per semester.
- D. Be responsible for initiating and coordinating Senators to host at least two (2) town halls per college term within their respective college.
- E. Have the power to create committees to serve within the Sitting of the Senate.
 - Oversee the work of all standing committees in respective area
- F. Be responsible for hosting at least three (3) town halls per term.
 - Senators will be tasked with the execution of said events

VII. The Secretary of the Student Government Association shall:

- A. Be appointed by the President of the SGA.
 - This will be determined by conducting interviews of qualified candidates.
- B. Be responsible for preparing and providing necessary materials for the Sitting of the Senate.

- C. Be responsible for other duties that may have to do with clerical work as assigned by the SGA President.
- D. Record the minutes at the Sitting of the Senate and the Executive Branch meetings.
- E. Not be a voting member at the Executive Branch's meetings.
- F. Is not required to attend any additional events (e.g. meetings with dining services or special events hosted by SGA) unless there is a need for minutes to be recorded.

VIII. The Vice President, Speaker(s), and Secretary shall also exercise the following duties:

- A. In the absence of the President, preside over the Sitting of the Senate and act as delegates to the Student Advisory Council in order of succession.
- B. Serve on such committees as required by the University.
- C. Perform those activities as may be delegated by the SGA President.
- D. Attend all meetings as required by the SGA President

Section 2: Legislative Branch

I. Senators shall:

- A. Throughout the college term gather the opinions and ideas of the student body.
- B. Perform at least two (2) town halls within their respective college/area of service.
- C. Be responsible for relaying any information they have gained pertaining the student body to the Speaker of the Senate .
- D. Perform those activities as may be delegated by the Speaker of the Senate.
- E. Attend at least five (5) scheduled Sitting of the Senate meetings.
- F. Attend all meetings scheduled by the Speaker of the Senate.
- G. Senators must serve under committees recommended by the Speaker of the Senate
- H. Senators must maintain at least two (2) office hours in the SGA office per week.
- I. Present ideas and requests to the SGA Speaker of the Senate and Sitting of the Senate through the written medium of resolutions.

Section 3: Administrative Committees

- I. The President may appoint committees within the Sitting of the Senate for the duration of one (1) year.
 - These appointed committees must be approved by a majority (51%) vote of the present Sitting of the Senate.
- II. Funding for all such committees shall be allocated in the budget of the SGA.
 - Funding for all committees will be allocated by the Vice President, voted on by the Executive Branch, and then voted on by the Senate.
- III. Senators shall serve on one or more of these permanent committees that pertain to their interest
 - **Cougar Allocation Committee**
 - 7 Senators (1 per college & 1 at Large)
 - Chair: Treasurer
 - **Resolutions Committee**
 - 6 Senators
 - Chair: Vice President
 - **Public Relations**
 - 4 Senators
 - Chair: Press Secretary
 - **Event Planning Committee**
 - 7 Senators
 - Chair: Director of Event and Activity Planning
 - **Spirit Committee**
 - 4 Senators
 - **All In Committee**
 - 1 Senator from the College of Letters and Sciences
 - Chair: Director of Governmental Affairs

Section 4: Cabinet Positions

- I. The Cabinet shall consist of the Chief of Staff, the Press Secretary, the Attorney General, the Director of SGA Activities & Events, the Director of Government Affairs, and the Student Community Advocate. Each Cabinet member shall be appointed by the President and confirmed by a majority vote within the Sitting of the Senate.
- II. The Chief of Staff shall:
 - A. Oversee all other Cabinet positions.
- III. The Press Secretary shall:
 - A. Report directly to the Chief of Staff.

- B. Represent the Executive Branch to all media outlets such as, but not limited to, local and campus newspapers and social media outlets.
 - C. Serves as chair of the Public Relations Committee
- IV. The Attorney General shall:
- A. Ensure all actions of the Executive Branch and Student Government are legal and align with statutes by working with the Chief Justice.
 - B. Serve as a defense for the Executive Branch and the Student Government Association in all appeals.
- V. The Director of SGA Activities & Events shall:
- A. Be in charge of coordinating events with the ability to branch out as deemed appropriate by the Chief of Staff, President, or Vice President.
- VI. The Director of Government Affairs shall:
- A. Be the primary liaison between the SGA members and the University System of Georgia officials.
 - This department will advocate on behalf of the nation and will inform students about legislation that will impact them.
 - B. Serve as the Chair of the All In Committee.
- VII. The Student Community Advocate shall:
- A. Aim to serve the individual student, providing them with a platform to articulate their perspective and working on behalf of underserved campus communities.
 - B. Be responsible for addressing all matters of public health on campus.

Article V: Judicial Council

Section 1: Membership

- I. The Judicial Council shall consist of eight (8) students.
 - A. Eight (8) justices will be elected at large by the student body.
 - B. One (1) Chief Justice, from the Eight (8) Justices, will be appointed by the SGA president.

- The Chief Justice shall serve in the position until the individual graduates from CSU, the individual resigns from the position, or whichever comes first.
- II. Undergraduate students must have an institutional GPA of at least 2.0 and graduate students at least 3.0 in order to be nominated. No member of the Senate voting body or the executive branch may serve as a Judicial Council member.

Section 2: Jurisdiction

- I. All students or organizations desiring to bring an action or have a hearing before the Judicial Council must submit a written request or email to the Chief Justice.
 - The appellate duties of the Judicial Council will include judicial review of the Sitting of the Senate actions and interpretation of the SGA Constitution.
 - Other duties will include hearing appeals related to parking, library, posting fines, elections/campaigning infractions, and impeachment duties as defined in Article IX of this Constitution.
- II. The Chief Justice shall:
 - Preside over the Judicial Council and outline jurisdiction of cases under adjudication.
 - Advise the Executive Branch and the Senate on constitutional matters upon request.
 - Report to the Executive Branch and the Senate on Judicial Council activities.
 - Write the majority opinion and file a copy of reports with the appropriate University official.
 - Monitor and facilitate all voting that takes place during the Sitting of the Senate and report the findings to the appropriate SGA officer or University official.
 - Serve on committees as required by the University.
 - Oversee the work of all standing committees in respective areas.
 - Be responsible for maintaining storage of all SGA files and submitting records to the Columbus State University Archives.
- III. No justice shall serve on a hearing panel where a conflict of interest would arise because of SGA affiliation.

Article VI: Finance

Section 1: Allocations

- I. The money allocated by the Student Activity Fee committee for the SGA to use shall be budgeted and prepared by the Treasurer.
 - The budget will be submitted to the SGA President for approval before the first Sitting of the Senate of Fall.
 - If approved by the SGA President, it will then be submitted to the appropriate University personnel for approval.
- II. The Executive Branch is authorized to approve amendments to the SGA's budget, as necessary.

Section 2: Student Government Association Expenditures

- I. All expenditures for the SGA will be made according to University procedures and the Board of Regents policies, and will be approved by the Treasurer and the President of the Student Government Association.
- II. The Student Government Association reserves the right to make any purchase that is necessary, as long as University procedures are followed, and the Board of Regents policies are heeded.

Section 3: Student Government Association Registered Student Organization (RSO) Funding:

In order to receive funding from SGA RSOs must complete the following:

- I. Be in good standing with Student Life & Development
 1. Attend monthly Presidents' Council meetings
 - A good standing is defined as no more than 2 unexcused absences per semester
 2. Attended by either the RSO President or Vice President
 - a. If the RSO President or Vice President cannot attend, it must be communicated to the President of SGA at least a week in advance
 - A designee of the RSO's executive team may attend the meeting in lieu of the President or Vice President after the SGA President's approval
- II. Be an Active RSO
 - Complete monthly oversight forms
 - Sit on SGA Standing Committees or other University Committees as requested by the SGA Vice President

III. Funding Approvals:

- A. Must submit a funding request
- B. Amounts below \$250 are approved by the Treasurer & President
- C. Funds above \$250 require the following
 - Approved by the Cougar Allocation Committee
 - Sponsorship by an SGA Senator from the Cougar Allocation Committee
 - If more than \$500, must be approved by the majority of Senators in the Sitting of the Senate

IV. The Treasurer of the Student Body shall have veto equal to that of the President of the Student Government Association in all matters concerning Budget approval and revisions to said budget.

Article VII: Elections

Section 1: General

The President, Vice President, Treasurer, two (2) Senators at-large, and (8) Justices shall be elected at-large. The Chief Justice will be appointed by the SGA president. Two (2) Senators will be elected by each college and from the Graduate School. The President and the Vice President shall run together as an official ticket.

Section 2: Qualifications

I. Executive Branch

- A. The President, Vice President, and the Treasurer must be a sophomore, junior, senior, graduate, or post baccalaureate student (in a degree or certification program) during their entire term, and must have completed two (2) semesters as a Columbus State University student within the twelve-month period immediately prior to their elected term. During those two semesters, they must have achieved at least 24 semester hours.
- B. A candidate for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Chief Justice must have at least a 2.75 GPA as calculated by the institutional grade point average (as explained in the Columbus State University Catalog), graduate students must have at least a 3.0 GPA.

II. Senators

- A. A candidate for Senator must have completed at least one (1) semester as a Columbus State University student prior to their elected term, completing and obtaining at least 12 credit hours.
- B. A candidate for Senator must be a declared major in the college they represent. An undergraduate candidate must have at least a 2.0 GPA as calculated by the institutional grade point average (as explained in the Columbus State University Catalog); a graduate student must have at least a 3.0 GPA.
- C. Once Senators are elected, as a group, they must elect one of their members as the Speaker of the Senate who will serve on the Executive Branch. This must be completed before the last Sitting of the Senate meeting of the Spring term.
 - The Speaker of the Sitting of the Senate must have a minimum GPA of 2.75 at the time of being elected.
 - If an individual wishes to run for the position and does not have the minimum GPA, an exception may be made if approved by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Senators.
 - If no Senator has a minimum GPA of 2.75 at the time of being elected, an exception may be granted by a majority (51%) vote of the Sitting of the Senate present.

Section 3: Elections

- I. The elections will be held in the Spring semester.

Section 4: Terms of Office

- I. The terms of office shall be one (1) year, beginning with the last Sitting of the Senate meeting at the end of the spring semester.
 - A. Swearing in should be at the last Sitting of the Senate meeting of the spring semester.
- II. Consecutive terms of office shall be limited to two (2).

Article VIII: Vacancies

Section 1: Elected Offices

I. President

A. In the event the office of President becomes vacant, the order of succession to that office shall be: Vice President, Treasurer, and Chief Justice.

II. Vice President, Treasurer, Chief Justice and Senators: A vacancy in these offices shall be filled by appointment by the SGA President with the approval of at least a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Sitting of the Senate present.

III. The Speaker of the Senate vacancy shall be filled in accordance with Article IV: Section 2 of this Constitution.

Section 2: Registered Student Organization

A. Vacancies in these positions will be filled by the policies governing their respective organizations.

Section 3: Staff Positions

I. Secretary

A. Be removed from the position based on unsatisfactory job performance.

B. The open position will be replaced at the discretion of the SGA President.

Article IX: Impeachment

Section 1: Procedures

I. Impeachment proceedings may be initiated by any student.

II. The impeachment will be submitted to the Chief Justice of the Judicial Council. The Judicial Council will determine if probable cause exists for a trial. If so, the Chief Justice will transmit the impeachment motion to the presiding officer in the Student Government Association.

A. The impeachment may be submitted via a letter or an email, but not by word-of-mouth.

B. The presiding officer, upon receiving the impeachment motion, will set the trial date within no more than five (5) school days.

- III. The Sitting of the Senate will host a hearing for any person being impeached.
- A. The trial will be conducted in accordance with established judicial procedure, with the Senate acting as a jury.
 - B. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Senate present is required to pass the motion. The only punishment which can be incurred is removal from office as a result of the above action.
- IV. In cases of impeachment of the President, the Vice President shall act as the presiding officer of the Student Government Association and The Sitting of the Senate.

Article X: Amendments

Section 1: Proposal of Amendments

- I. An amendment may be proposed by a petition of 10 percent (10%) of the student body or a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Senate.
- All petitions must be presented to the President of the Student Government Association.
 - A proposed amendment must be posted two weeks before it is voted upon by the Senate or the student body.

Section 2: Adoption of Amendments

- I. Such amendments shall be adopted if passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate present, and approved by the President of Columbus State University.

Article XI: Ratification

- I. This constitution shall take effect upon the winning vote of the Sitting of the Senate.