

*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 may maintain and promote the best interest of students.
6. To assist in the development of academic programs, co-curricular activities, and policies which affect students.
7. To promote full understanding and to facilitate communication and cooperation between students and all faculty and administration.

## **Article III: Forum**

### **Section 1: Defining of Forum and forum**

- A. Forum is a group of persons that represent themselves or an organization, as well as the Executive of the Student Government Association.

B. The meeting that the SGA hosts will be known as forum.

## **Section 2: Membership**

The Forum shall consist of the following three elements:

A. The Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the President of the student body, Vice President of Scholastic Affairs, Treasurer, Speaker of the Senate, and Speaker of the Representatives.

B. The voting Forum body, which shall consist of the following two components:

1. The Senators: Two Senators will be elected to represent each college, including the honors college. One senator will be elected to represent the graduate school.

2. The campus' Registered Student Organization (RSO) representatives; one (1) representative from each organization.

1. Each student organization names an official representative and a designated alternate to represent that particular organization at Forum. Either one of these individuals, but not both, may represent the organization at a forum session.

2. No single individual may represent more than one organization in the Forum.

C. The Judicial Branch, consists of the Chief Justice and Judicial Council members.

1. The Chief Justice or an alternate Judicial Council member may serve as an advisor on constitutional matters during forum sessions at the request of the presiding executive officer.

D. Class representatives are elected by members of the student body within their class, vacant seats may be filled by the Speaker of the Representatives upon the candidate's application approval by the SGA advisor and President. Class representatives may not serve as an RSO representative simultaneously.

## **Section 3: Qualifications**

A. All members and members-elect of the Forum 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.

1. If a 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 Forum**

- A. The Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the Representatives shall be voting members of the Executive Committee, and have a regular vote in the Forum.
- B. The President shall have a tie breaking vote.
- C. The Vice President of Scholastic Affairs and Treasurer shall not be a voting member.
- D. No member of the Judicial Branch may be a voting member of the Forum.
- E. The secretary will not be a voting member of the Forum

#### **Section 5: Removal of Forum Members**

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

- A. Automatic Removals and Suspensions
  - 1. General. Any Forum 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 Forum. The GPA and enrollment status of Forum members shall be confirmed at the beginning of each academic term.
    - 1. Automatic removals shall be officially recorded in the minutes of the first full Forum meeting of each academic term.
  - 2. Suspension of Campus Registered Student Organization from SGA. To remain active in the SGA, an organization must have a representative attending at least 65% of the Forum 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.
    - 1. For example, if there are eight forum dates scheduled, and the representative misses three forums, on the third absence suspension will take effect.
    - 2. 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 forum following the offence, and the organization shall be duly notified.
  - 3. Suspension of Class Representatives

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

#### B. Other Removals

1. The Forum may, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, remove a representative from the Forum for failure to fulfill their committee or project responsibilities.
2. Except for automatic removals because of GPA, enrollment status, or suspension from the University, the President, the Vice President for Scholastic Affairs, the Treasurer, Speaker of Senate, Senators, Speaker of Representatives, the Chief Justice, and members of the Judicial Council, may only be removed by impeachment (see Article IX).
3. If an individual RSO representative is removed from forum by the Forum, then an organization must present a replacement by one forum meeting of the removal, or lose representation.

### **Section 6: Powers, Duties, Procedures**

#### A. Powers and Duties

1. The Forum shall have the power to recommend policies governing student life at Columbus State University and bylaws governing the Forum. The forum shall require a majority (51%), quorum, of the Senate and the Representatives each respectively. Without a majority of both houses, the recommendation or bylaw will fail.
2. Each RSO and class representative of the Forum shall serve on at least one (1) student/faculty committee, if there are enough committees to be served on.
3. All members of the Forum will have one (1) vote, and all votes will carry equal weight.

#### B. Procedures

1. The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority.
2. Quorum shall be established by the Forum present at that particular forum; however, at no time shall it be less than ten (10) voting members. Executive Committee members shall not be counted as voting members.
3. Any faculty member, administration official, or student, may introduce a proposal.

4. Forum shall meet a minimum of six sessions per academic term as follows: the full Forum shall meet at least four (4) times.
  1. The next academic term's meeting dates shall be established by the Executive Committee 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 Committee**

- A. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President of the student body, Vice President of Scholastic Affairs, Treasurer, Speaker of the Senate, Speaker of the Representatives, and Secretary.
- B. 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:
  1. Preside over the Forum and act as a voting member only to break a tie.
  2. Be the chief executive officer of the SGA, and be responsible for the implementation of student government policies.
  3. Serve as the official spokesperson and representative of the student body.
  4. Chair the Executive Committee and have the power to veto any topic, recommendation, or subject brought up during the Executive Committee's meeting.
    1. A two-thirds majority (2/3) of the Executive Committee's votes is required to override the veto.
  5. 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.
  6. Act as a delegate to the Student Advisory Council and the Board of Regents.
  7. Have the authority to sign purchase orders if the Treasurer is unable to do so.

8. Have a veto in the Forum, which can be overridden by a two-thirds majority (2/3) vote of the members present.
    1. This veto can go towards any vote or motion that takes place during the forum.
  9. Assign University committees to the Vice Presidents and Speakers as their primary areas of concern.
  10. Has the power to create committees to serve the Executive Committee at their discretion in order to research or create solutions to problems concerning the student body.
- C. The Vice Presidents and Speakers are responsible for investigating, developing, overseeing, and initiating policies and programs in their areas of concern.
- D. The Vice President of Scholastic Affairs shall:
1. Be responsible for formulating policies concerning academic areas that affect the student body, and for advising the Executive Committee and the Forum on all matters relative to the delegated areas of responsibility.
  2. Chair any social and philanthropic projects within all of SGA.
  3. Have the power to delegate responsibilities of the aforementioned events to other subordinate members of the Student Government Association, including the Executive Committee and Senate.
  4. Be responsible for any and all of the SGA's social media accounts.
  5. Serve on committees as required by the University.
  6. Oversee the work of all standing committees on which students serve within the Vice President of Scholastic Affairs' area.
- E. The Treasurer shall:
1. Prepare a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which shall be submitted to the Executive Committee, and approved by the Executive Committee.
  2. Be responsible for advising the Executive Committee and the Forum on all matters relative to the delegated area of responsibility.
  3. Be responsible for keeping a record of approved and denied money requests to use as guidance for future money requests.



4. Be responsible for overseeing all budget amendments and money requests.
  5. Oversee the work of all standing committees on which students serve within the Treasurer's area.
  6. Serve on committees as required by the University.
  7. Shall be responsible for all logistical affairs such as booking venues, completing eQuests.
- F. The Speaker of the Senate shall:
1. Be responsible for accurately voicing the ideas and opinions of the Senators to the Executive Committee.
  2. The Speaker is further responsible for relaying information from the Executive Committee back to the Senators.
  3. Be responsible for establishing an attendance policy and meeting times for the Senators.
    1. Must meet a minimum of ten (10) times per semester.
  4. Be responsible for initiating and coordinating Senators to host at least two town halls per college term, within their respective college.
  5. Have the power to create committees to serve within the Senate.
    1. Oversee the work of all standing committees in respective area
  6. Be in conjunction with the Speaker of the Representatives for developing events to engage the student body.
  7. Be responsible for hosting at least three town halls per term.
    1. Senators will be tasked with the execution of said events
- G. The Speaker of the Representatives shall:
1. Be responsible for accurately voicing the ideas and opinions of the Registered Student Organizations representatives to the Executive Committee.
  2. The Speaker is further responsible for relaying information from the Executive Committee back to the organizational representatives.

3. Be responsible for establishing an attendance policy and meeting times for the representatives, if need be.
4. Develop a list of Senate and Institutional committees that require student representation.g
  1. Assign the SGA representatives to these committees.
  2. Have the SGA President sign off on this list.
5. Be responsible for having meetings with the SGA representors on the above-mentioned committees.
  1. The Speaker should gather information from that representor about their respective committee, and then relay that information to the SGA President.
6. Be in conjunction with the Speaker of the Senate for developing events to engage the student body.
  1. Assign the SGA representatives to help Senators to implement these events.

H. The secretary of the Student Government Association shall:

1. Be appointed by the President of the SGA.
  1. This will be determined by conducting interviews of qualified candidates.
2. Be responsible for preparing and providing necessary materials for the forum.
  1. Be responsible for other duties
  2. that may have to do with clerical work as assigned by the SGA President.
3. Record the minutes at the forum and the Executive Committee meetings.
4. Not be a voting member at the Executive Committee's meetings.
5. Is not required to attend any additional events (e.g. meetings with dining services or special events SGA puts on) unless there is a need for minutes to be recorded.

I. The Vice Presidents, Speakers, and Secretary shall also exercise the following duties:

1. In the absence of the President, preside over the Forum and act as delegates to the Student Advisory Council in order of succession.
2. Serve on such committees as required by the University.

3. Perform those activities as may be delegated by the SGA President.
4. Attend all meetings as required by the SGA President

## **Section 2: Legislative Branch**

### **A. Senators shall:**

1. Throughout the college term gather the opinions and ideas of the student body.
2. Perform at least two town halls within their respective college/area of service.
3. Be responsible for relaying any information they have gained pertaining the student body to the Speaker of the Senate.
4. Perform those activities as may be delegated by the Speaker of the Senate.
5. Attend at least five (5) scheduled forum meetings.
6. Attend all meetings scheduled by the Speaker of the Senate.
7. Senators must serve under committees recommended by the Speaker of the Senate.
8. Senators must maintain at least 2 office hours in the SGA office per week.
9. Present ideas and requests to the SGA Speaker of the Senate and Forum through the written medium of resolutions.

### **B. Registered Student Organization representatives shall:**

1. Also known as the SGA representatives.
2. Represent their respective RSO, but also represent the student body as a whole.
3. Be responsible for serving on at least one Senate or Institutional committees.
  1. Attend any meetings the committee may hold.
  2. Report to the Speaker of the Representatives about what was discussed in the committee meeting.
4. Be responsible for relaying any new information regarding the student body to the Speaker of the Representatives.
5. Attend at least 65% of scheduled forum meetings.

6. Attend all meetings scheduled by the Speaker of the Representatives.

### **Section 3: Administrative Committees**

- A. The Forum may appoint committees within the executive branch for the duration of one (1) year.
  1. These appointed committees must be approved by a majority (51%) vote of the present Forum.
- B. Funding for all such committees shall be allocated in the budget of the SGA.
  1. Funding for all committees will be allocated by the Vice President of Financial Affairs, voted on by the Executive Committee, and then voted on by the Forum.

## **Article V: Judicial Council**

### **Section 1: Membership**

- A. The Judicial Council shall consist of six (6) students.
  1. Six (6) justices will be elected at large by the student body.
  2. One (1) Chief Justice, from the six (6) Justices, will be appointed by the SGA president.
    1. The Chief Justice shall serve in the position until the individual graduates from CSU, the individual resigns from the position, or whichever comes first.
- B. Undergraduate students must have an institutional GPA of at least 2.5 and graduate students at least 3.0 in order to be nominated. No member of the Forum voting body or the executive branch may serve as a Judicial Council member.

### **Section 2: Jurisdiction**

- A. 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.
  1. The appellate duties of the Judicial Council will include judicial review of forum actions and interpretation of the SGA Constitution.
  2. 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.
- B. The Chief Justice shall:

1. Preside over the Judicial Council and outline jurisdiction of cases under adjudication.
  2. Advise the Executive Committee and the Forum on constitutional matters upon request.
  3. Report to the Executive Committee and the Forum on Judicial Council activities.
  4. Write the majority opinion and file a copy of reports with the appropriate University official.
  5. Monitor and facilitate all voting that takes place during forum, and report the findings to the appropriate SGA officer or University official.
  6. Serve on committees as required by the University.
  7. Oversee the work of all standing committees in respective areas.
  8. Be responsible for maintaining storage of all SGA files and submitting records to the Columbus State University Archives.
- C. 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**

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

### **Section 2: Student Government Association Expenditures**

- A. 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.

- B. 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.

## **Article VII: Elections**

### **Section 1: General**

The President, Vice President of Scholastic Affairs, Treasurer, two (2) Senators at-large, and (6) 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 Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the Representatives shall be elected as outlined in Article IV: Section 2 of this Constitution.

- A. The President and the Vice President of Scholastic Affairs shall run together as an official ticket.

### **Section 2: Qualifications**

#### **A. Executive Committee**

1. The President, Vice President of Scholastic Affairs, 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.
2. A candidate for President, Vice President for Scholastic Affairs, 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.

#### **B. Senators**

1. 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.
2. A candidate for Senator must be a declared major in the college they represent. An undergraduate candidate must have at least a 2.5 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.

3. 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 Committee. This must be completed before the last forum meeting of the Spring term.
  1. The Speaker of the Senate must have a minimum GPA of 2.75 at the time of being elected.
  2. If an individual wish 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.
  3. 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 Forum present.

#### C. Speaker of the Representatives

1. Prior to the last forum meeting of the spring term, RSO representatives must elect one of their members to serve as the Speaker of the Representatives who will serve on the Executive Committee.
  1. The Speaker of the Representatives must have a minimum GPA of 2.75 at the time of being elected.
  2. If an individual wish 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 SGA representatives.
  3. If no representative 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 Forum present.

### **Section 3: Elections**

- A. The elections will be held in the spring semester.

### **Section 4: Terms of Office**

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

## **Article VIII: Vacancies**

### **Section 1: Elected Offices**

#### A. President

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

#### B. Vice President of Scholastic Affairs, 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 Forum present.

#### C. The Speaker of the Senate and Speaker of the Representatives: vacancies 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**

#### A. Secretary

1. Be removed from the position based on unsatisfactory job performance.
2. The open position will be replaced at the discretion of the SGA President.

## **Article IX: Impeachment**

### **Section 1: Procedures**

#### A. Impeachment proceedings may be initiated by any student.

#### B. 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.

1. The impeachment may be submitted via a letter or an email, but not by word-of-mouth.
2. The presiding officer, upon receiving the impeachment motion, will set the trial date within no more than five (5) school days.

#### C. The Forum will host a hearing for any person being impeached.



1. The trial will be conducted in accordance with established judicial procedure, with the Forum acting as a jury.
  2. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Forum 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.
- D. In cases of impeachment of the President, the Vice President of Scholastic Affairs shall act as the presiding officer of the Student Government Association and Forum.

## **Article X: Amendments**

### **Section 1: Proposal of Amendments**

- A. 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 Forum.
  1. All petitions must be presented to the President of the Student Government Association.
  2. A proposed amendment must be posted two weeks before it is voted upon by the Forum or the student body.

### **Section 2: Adoption of Amendments**

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

## **Article XI: Ratification**

- A. This constitution shall take effect upon the winning vote of Forum.