

Student Government Constitution

Preamble

We, the students of Columbus State University, desiring a more representative and efficient student government, wanting better communications 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 of Columbus State University.

Article II: Objectives

To provide direct channels for responsible and effective participation in university governance.

To provide an official and representative organization to receive complaints, consider problems, and participate in making decisions affecting the university.

To support programs that may directly benefit students and the university.

To provide a means whereby students may gain experience and training in responsible political participation and leadership.

To review regulations affecting academic activities, general educational policy and welfare of the university, and such other matters as may maintain and promote the best interest of students.

To assist in the development of academic programs, co-curricular activities and policies which affect students.

To promote full understanding and to facilitate communication and cooperation between students and the faculty and administration.

Article III: Forum

Section 1: Membership

1. 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, Vice President of Finance, Speaker of the Senate, and Speaker of the Representatives. 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 forum sessions. However, the President shall have a tie-breaking vote.
 - b. The voting forum body, which shall consist of the following two components:
 1. The Senators-at-Large, who shall be elected by the student body. The number of senators shall not exceed 15. As a group they must elect one of their members as the Speaker of the Senate to serve on the executive committee before the first forum meeting of the summer term.
 2. The campus organization representatives, one (1) from each organization or activity funded through student activity fees or recognized by the activities committee. No single individual may represent more than one organization in the forum. Before the second

- forum meeting of the fall term, these representatives must elect one of their members to serve as the speaker of the representatives who will serve on the executive committee.
- c. The Judicial Branch, consisting of the Chief Justice and Judicial Council members. The chief justice or an alternate Judicial Council member may serve as advisor on constitutional matters during forum sessions at the request of the presiding officer. No member of the Judicial Branch may vote in forum sessions.
2. All members and members-elect of the forum must have and maintain an enrollment status of at least half-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.

Section 2: Removal of Forum Members

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

1. Automatic Removals and Suspensions

- a. General. Any forum member whose GPA or enrollment status drops below the minimums defined in Article III, Section 1-B 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. Automatic removals shall be officially recorded in the minutes of the first full forum meeting of each academic term.
- b. Organization Representatives. Any official representative of a campus student organization who fails to attend at least 50% of the forum meetings in an academic term shall be automatically removed from the forum. Participation during the prior term shall be confirmed at the beginning of each new term. Automatic removals shall be officially recorded in the minutes of the first full forum meeting of each academic term and the organization shall be notified and requested to designate a new official representative.
- c. Suspension of Campus Organizations from SGA. Each student organization names an official representative and a designated alternate to the SGA. Either one of these individuals, but not both, may represent the organization at a forum session. To remain active in the SGA, an organization must have a representative attending at least 50% 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 following academic term.
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 full forum meeting of the academic term and the organization shall be duly notified.

2. Other Removals

- a. The forum may, by a two-thirds vote, remove a representative from the forum for failure to fulfill his/her committee or project responsibilities.
- b. With the exception of automatic removals because of GPA, enrollment status, or suspension from the university, Senators, the President, the Vice-President for Scholastic Affairs, the Vice-President of Finance, the Chief Justice and members of the Judicial Council may only be removed by impeachment (see Article IX).

Section 3: Powers, Duties, Procedures

1. Powers and Duties

- a. The forum shall have the power to recommend policies governing student life at Columbus State University and bylaws governing the forum. It shall require a majority of the Senate and the Representatives each respectively. Without a majority of both houses, the recommendation or bylaw will fail.
- b. Each member of the forum shall serve on at least one (1) student/faculty committee at the pleasure of the President of the university.
- c. All members of the forum will have one (1) vote, and all votes will carry equal weight.

2. Procedures

- a. The most recent edition of Roberts' Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority; however, in all conflicts this constitution shall prevail.
- b. Quorum shall be established by the forum; however, at no time shall it be less than ten (10) voting members. Executive committee members shall not be counted in determining members.
- c. Any faculty member, administration official or student may introduce a proposal.
- d. The forum shall meet a minimum of six sessions per academic term as follows: the full forum shall meet at least four (4) times and each of the two components of the voting forum shall meet at least two (2) times. The next academic term's meeting dates shall be established by the executive committee and made public no later than two weeks prior to the end of each academic term.

Article IV: Executive Branch

Section 1: The Executive Committee

1. The executive committee shall be composed of the President of the student body, Vice President of Scholastic Affairs, Vice President of Finance, Speaker of the Senate, and Speaker of the Representatives.
2. The President is in charge of supervising the total operation and function of all committees; is responsible for working with the chairpersons in initiating programs for their areas of concern; and shall exercise the following duties:
 - a. Preside over the forum and act as a voting member.
 - b. Be the chief executive officer and be responsible for the implementation of student government policies.
 - c. Serve as official spokesperson and representative of the student body.
 - d. Chair the Executive Committee and have a veto requiring a majority of Executive Committee votes to be overridden.
 - e. Serve on the Alumni Council and other such committees as required by the university.
 - f. Act as a delegate to the student advisory council, Board of Regents.
 - g. Have the authority to sign purchase orders if the Vice President of Finance is unable to do so.
 - h. Serve on committees as required by the University.
 - i. Have a veto in the forum which can be overridden by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present.
 - j. Assign university committees to the Vice Presidents and Speakers as their primary areas of concern.

3. The Vice Presidents and Speakers are responsible for investigating, developing, overseeing, and initiating policies and programs in their areas of concern.
 - a. 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. Recommend to the university President, with approval of the forum, students who are to serve on university committees and in other university positions. Those appointed will serve at the pleasure of the President of the university.
 3. Chair the annual social and philanthropic projects.
 4. Have the power to delegate responsibilities of the aforementioned events to other members of Student Government Association.
 5. Serve on committees as required by the University
 6. Oversee the work of all standing committees on which students serve within that area.
 - b. The Vice President of Finance shall:
 1. Prepare a proposed budget which shall be submitted to 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 overseeing all budget amendments and money requests.
 4. Oversee the work of all standing committees on which students serve within that area.
 5. Serve on committees as required by the University.
 - c. The Speaker of the Senate shall be responsible for accurately voicing the ideas and opinions of the Senators-at-Large to the Executive Committee. The Speaker is further responsible for relaying information from the Executive Committee back to the Senators-at-Large.
 - d. The Speaker of the Representatives shall be responsible for accurately voicing the ideas and opinions of the organizational representatives to the Executive Committee. The Speaker is further responsible for relaying information from the Executive Committee back to the organizational representatives.
 - e. The vice presidents and speakers 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 President.

Section 2: Administrative Committees

1. The forum may appoint committees within the executive branch for the duration of one (1) year.
2. Funding for all such committees shall be allocated in the budget of the student government.

Article V: Judicial Council

Section 1: Membership

1. The Judicial Council shall consist of six (6) students, five (5) justices elected by the forum and the Chief Justice who is elected at-large by the student body during elections.
2. Judicial council members shall be nominated and elected by the forum during a regularly scheduled forum meeting. Undergraduate students must have an institutional GPA of at least 2.0, graduate students 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

1. All students or organizations desiring to bring an action or have a hearing before the Judicial Council must submit a written request to the Chief Justice. The appellate duties of the Judicial Council will include judicial review of

forum actions and interpretation of the SGA Constitution. Other duties will include hearing appeals related to parking, library, or posting fines, and impeachment duties as defined in Article IX of this Constitution.

2. The Chief Justice shall:
 - a. Preside over the Judicial Council and outline jurisdiction of cases under adjudication.
 - b. Advise the Executive Committee and the forum on constitutional matters upon request.
 - c. Report to the Executive Committee and the forum on Judicial Council activities.
 - d. Write the majority opinion and file a copy of reports with the appropriate university official.
3. Justices, to include the Chief Justice, shall serve on the University Grievance Committee, however no justice shall serve on a hearing panel where a conflict of interest would arise because of the SGA affiliation.

Article VI: Finance

Section 1: Allocations

1. The Executive Committee shall prepare a proposed budget which shall be submitted to the forum on the last regular session of spring semester for review. Changes, if any, must be passed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the forum members present.
2. The forum shall return to the Executive Committee a recommended budget for approval at the first regular session of spring semester. Otherwise the executive committee shall be authorized to submit the proposed budget to the appropriate university committee for approval. The budget shall then be prepared by the Vice President of Finance in accordance with current fiscal Columbus State University policies for submission to the appropriate university committee for approval.
3. The Executive Committee shall be authorized to approve budget amendments as necessary unless otherwise restricted by the forum.

Section 2: Expenditures

All expenditures will be made according to university procedures and will be approved by the Vice President of Finance or the President of the student body.

Article VII: Elections

Section 1: General

The President, Vice President of Scholastic Affairs, Vice President of Finance, Senators, and the Chief Justice shall be elected at large. The Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the Representatives shall be elected as outlined in Article 3: Section 1 of this constitution.

Section 2: Qualifications

1. **Executive Committee**
 - a. The President, Vice President of Scholastic Affairs, and the Vice President of Finance must be a sophomore, junior, senior, graduate, or post baccalaureate student (in a degree or certification program) during his/her entire term, and must have completed two (2) semesters as a Columbus State University student within the eighteen month period immediately prior to his/her elected term. During those two semesters, he/she must have achieved at least 25 semester hours.
 - b. A candidate for President, Vice President for Scholastic Affairs, Vice President for Finance, and Chief Justice must have at least a 2.5 GPA as calculated by the institutional grade point average (as explained in the Columbus State University Catalog), graduate students, 3.0 GPA.
2. **Senators-at-Large**
 - a. Senators-at-Large must have completed at least one (1) semester as Columbus State University students prior to their elected terms. 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), graduate students, 3.0 GPA.

Section 3: Elections

The elections will be held in the spring semester.

Section 4: Terms of Office

The terms of office shall be one (1) year, beginning with the last SGA meeting at the end of the spring semester. Consecutive terms of office shall be limited to two (2).

Article VIII: Vacancies

Section 1: Elected Offices

1. President
In the event the office of president becomes vacant, the order of succession to that office shall be:
 - a. Vice President of Scholastic Affairs
 - b. Vice President of Finance
 - c. Chief Justice
2. Vice President of Scholastic Affairs, Vice President of Finance, Chief Justice and Senators-at-large: A vacancy in these offices shall be filled by appointment by the President of the forum with the approval of at least three-quarters (3/4) of the forum.
3. The Speaker of the Senate and Speaker of the Representatives: vacancies shall be filled in accordance with Article 3, Section 1 of this constitution.

Section 2: Organizational Representatives

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

Article IX: Impeachment

Section 1: Procedures

1. Impeachment proceedings may be initiated by any student.
2. 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 of the forum.
3. The forum will try any person impeached. The presiding officer, upon receiving the impeachment motion, will set the trial date, in no case more than five (5) school days later. The trial will be conducted in accordance with established judicial procedure, with the forum acting as a jury. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of all members is required to pass the motion. The only punishment which can be incurred is removal from office as a result of the above action.
4. In cases of impeachment of the President, the Vice President of Scholastic Affairs shall act as the presiding officer of the forum.

Article X: Amendments

Section 1: Proposal of Amendments

An amendment may be proposed by a petition of 10 percent of the student body or a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the forum. 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 student body.

Section 2: Adoption of Amendments

Such amendments shall be adopted if passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting student body and approved by the President of Columbus State University.

Article XI: Ratification

This constitution shall take effect upon approval of the President of Columbus State University.