

Constitution of the Student Council at the College of Computing at Georgia Tech

Founded November 15, 2018
Revised January 10, 2019

Preamble

In order to provide a platform for students of the College of Computing at Georgia Tech to take an active role in the shaping of the future of the college, we, the students of the College of Computing, hereby establish this constitution to define our Student Council.

Article I: Name

Founded on November 13th of 2018, this organization shall be known as The Student Council at the College of Computing at Georgia Tech, henceforth referred to as Student Council.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of this organization is to:

- Organize Town Halls to provide a platform for all Georgia Tech College of Computing (CoC) students to organize and freely discuss issues concerning the CoC and its future;
- Establish a direct communication channel between the CoC students and the Dean of the CoC;
- Ensure that the voices of the CoC students are heard and taken into account when decisions concerning the future of the CoC are made by the CoC Administration.

Article III: Authority

Section 1. Policies:

This organization is a recognized student organization in the CoC and adheres to all campus policies set by Georgia Tech.

Section 2. Bylaws:

Administrative and procedural matters are governed by the bylaws established by this organization. Bylaws shall not conflict with the constitution. Provided that a quorum is present, bylaws can be introduced, modified or removed without an advance notice by a majority vote present in a Town Hall following a motion to vote.

Section 3. Partner Organizations:

Student Council partners with other organizations by allowing their representatives to be present in the Student Advisory Board. The organizations that Student Council partners with are:

- The CoC Student Organizations Council (OrgsCouncil), which is an organization providing a platform for student organizations' representatives to come together and discuss issues concerning the student organizations.
- The Student Government Association (SGA) which provides an avenue for students to assume a role in the governance of the institute as a whole.

Article IV: Membership

Section 1. Student Members:

Any CoC student is considered to be a student member in Student Council. For the purposes of this constitution a CoC student is defined to be any of the following:

- An active student working towards a Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degree at the CoC, including those pursuing online degrees,
- A transient student planning to return to their home institution after taking a specific course(s) at the CoC,
- A non-degree student, most of whose courses are offered by the CoC (i.e the majority of their credit hours are from courses offered by the CoC).

Section 2. Alumni Members:

Graduated students who would be eligible to be a student member if they had not graduated are considered to be alumni members.

Section 3. Discipline of Members:

Members violating Georgia Tech policies, or disrupting the meetings may face disciplinary action banning them from this organization for a limited amount of time. Bylaws describe the process to be followed for the discipline of members.

Article V: Officers

At all times there will be two boards of student members, referred to as the Executive Board and the Student Advisory Board. These members will be the officers of Student Council.

Section 1. Executive Board Members:

The Executive Board ensures that this organization is effectively run. Only student members can run for the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall be comprised of three members:

- Two Chairs tasked to: organize the meetings, ensure that meetings are run according to the constitution and the bylaws, and establish the link between the students and the CoC administration. Bylaws define the details of the responsibilities of the chairs.
- A Secretary tasked to: maintain the proper documentation for the organization, including publishing the meeting minutes and resolutions as well as maintaining the online presence of this organization. Bylaws define the details of the responsibilities of the secretary.

Section 2. Student Advisory Board Members:

The Student Advisory Board shall serve as a representative body elected by the students of the CoC to advise the administration and faculty of the college when making decisions that impact the CoC and its future. Bylaws define the details of the responsibilities of the secretary. The Student Advisory Board shall be composed of:

1. A Masters representative, pursuing a masters degree, elected by Masters students,
2. A PhD representative pursuing a doctoral degree, elected by PhD students,
3. An Underclassmen representative, pursuing an undergraduate degree and in their 1st or 2nd year, elected by 1st and 2nd year CoC undergraduate students,
4. An Upperclassmen representative, pursuing an undergraduate degree and in their 3rd or 4th+ year, elected by 3rd and 4th+ year CoC undergraduate students,
5. The Undergraduate CoC Student Government Association (SGA) representatives to the Undergraduate House of Representatives, elected as governed by SGA laws (the number of these is determined by SGA),
6. A TA representative, who is a teaching assistant for a course offered in the CoC, elected by CoC teaching assistants,
7. A Student Orgs representative, elected by the CoC Student Organizations Council,
8. A UROC representative, performing undergraduate research through UROC, elected by student members performing research through UROC.
9. A CM representative, pursuing an undergraduate degree in Computational Media (CM), elected by the CM Ambassadors student organization within the CoC.

Article VI: Election of Officers

Section 1. General Election Procedures:

All officer elections will happen by closed ballot. Only student members can vote in the officer elections. Members will fill out their ballots by ranking all of their preferred candidates from most to least preferred. The winner will be decided using an alternative vote (instant runoff) system. From the Encyclopedia Britannica:

“Alternative vote (AV), also called instant runoff, method of election [is one] in which voters rank candidates in order of preference. If any single candidate receives a majority of first-preference votes, that candidate is deemed elected. If no candidate clears this hurdle, the last-place candidate is eliminated and that candidate’s second preferences are reapportioned to others and so on until a candidate clears the threshold of 50 percent of the vote plus one.”

At the meeting where officer elections are to be held, each nominee should be allowed to speak on their own behalf before the vote occurs. This includes explaining why they wish to hold the position and what qualifies them to hold the position.

Before the election is to be held, the candidates are to leave the room so that private discussions can occur among the voting members. The candidates themselves do not get a vote.

Once a motion to vote is called and seconded, the vote will be conducted. The Executive Board will decide tie votes in the event that no candidate is able to achieve a majority vote after all iterations of the alternative vote.

Section 2. Elections for the Executive Board:

Elections for the Executive Board shall happen by closed ballot in the last meeting of the Fall and Spring semesters for the following semester (being Spring and Fall respectively). Any student

member can be nominated, nominate themselves, or vote in the elections. Once elected, officers will assume office at the next Town Hall meeting and serve until the officers selected in the following election assume the office. Officers are expected to ensure that the transition between themselves and the new officers happens smoothly.

Section 3. Elections for the Student Advisory Board:

Elections for the Advisory Board shall happen by closed ballot in the last meeting of the Fall and Spring semesters for the following semester (being Spring and Fall respectively). Once elected, officers will assume office at the next Town Hall meeting and serve until the officers selected in the following election assume the office. For each position in the Student Advisory Board, only the members who are eligible to run for the position can vote, with the SGA representatives (who are elected by SGA procedures), and the Student Organizations Council representative (who is elected by Student Organizations Council procedures) being exceptions. Members willing to participate in the election should follow the specific procedures set by the Chairs to prove their eligibility to run/vote for a particular category. Chairs should announce the verification procedures in the meeting prior to the election meeting, and these details should also be made clear in the public announcement of the meeting. Once elected, officers shall serve for one semester, and will assume office at the next Town Hall meeting. Officers are expected to ensure that the transition between new and old officers happens smoothly.

Article VII: Removal of Officers

Section 1:

Procedure for Removing an Officer: Any member may start a motion to remove an officer during a Town Hall meeting where quorum is present. Majority of the present members shall second the motion so that the removal of the officer be voted upon with closed ballot during the following Town Hall meeting. It is required that this vote be announced publicly prior to the beginning of this subsequent Town Hall.

Section 2:

Rights of the Officer in Question: In the event that members elect to vote to remove an officer, the officer in question has the following rights:

- The right to be aware that the vote will occur (this means that the other officers on the Executive and Advisory boards must make a good-faith effort to inform the officer in question of the vote and how to attend it),
- The right to attend the meeting where the vote will occur,
- The right to address the members for 10 minutes at the beginning of the meeting where the vote will occur in order to defend his/her actions.

Section 3. Vote for the Removal of Executive Board Members:

An Executive Board member shall be removed in either of the following cases:

1. With the approval of the other two Executive Board members and the majority vote in a closed ballot voting in a Town Hall.
2. Two-thirds votes in a closed ballot voting in a Town Hall.

Section 4. Replacement of Executive Board Members:

If an officer is removed or cannot hold the position for other reasons, the remaining Executive Board Members should organize an election in the earliest Town Hall allowing a nomination period of at least one week. The remaining Executive Board Members will appoint a temporary replacement in the interim. In the event that all Executive Board members have been removed or cannot hold their positions anymore, the Advisory Board Members should assume the Executive Board Member responsibilities described here for the replacement.

Section 5. Vote for the Removal of Student Advisory Board Members:

A Student Advisory Board member shall be removed in either of the following cases: 1. With the approval of the majority of the Student Advisory Board and a majority vote in a closed ballot voting in a Town Hall. 2. Two-thirds votes in a closed ballot voting in a Town Hall.

Section 6. Replacement of Student Advisory Board Members:

If an officer is removed or cannot hold the position for other reasons, the Executive Board Members should organize an election in the earliest Town Hall allowing a nomination period of at least one week. The remaining Executive Board Members will appoint a temporary replacement in the interim. In the event that all Executive Board members have been removed or cannot hold their positions anymore, the Advisory Board Members should assume the Executive Board Member responsibilities described here for the replacement. Exceptionally, if an SGA representative is removed or cannot hold the position for other reasons, the position will be left unfilled; if a Student Organizations representative is removed or cannot hold the position for other reasons, their respective member organizations will be requested to perform another election by their own process, otherwise the position will be left unfilled.

Article VIII: Meetings

Section 1. Town Halls:

Town Halls are the main meetings of Student Council. Officer elections and the changes to the constitution or bylaws can only be made during the Town Halls, when a quorum is present. Town Halls have to be announced publicly through email between one and two weeks before the planned date and time. At least one Town Hall meeting is to be held each month during the Spring and Fall semesters. The executive board is free to call more meetings than the minimum, and a meeting may also be called through a motion supported by a majority of the members when a quorum is present.

Section 2. Town Hall Resolution:

At the end of each Town Hall meeting, a resolution summarizing the decisions made should be prepared. The goal of the resolution is to ensure that issues discussed within the meetings are communicated to the office of the top level of the CoC administration. To add a statement to the resolution, a student member should raise a motion to open the discussion on it. Once the discussion has ended, the statement can be added to the resolution with a motion, which needs to be seconded by at least one other person. The statement can be amended during the discussion by the student member who raised it. The statements in the resolution should be ordered according to the number of members who seconded the motion to add it, with the most supported statement appearing at the top of the resolution. The Executive Board is responsible for scheduling a meeting with the CoC administration following the Town Hall where the statements on this resolution will be discussed.

Section 3. Parliamentary Procedure:

The Chairs will moderate discussions according to Robert's Rules of Order during Town Hall meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall also be used in instances not covered within this constitution.

Section 4. Quorum:

Quorum of the membership shall be 30 student members.

Section 5. Meeting Agenda:

The agenda for each Town Hall meetings will be set prior to the beginning of each meeting and posted publicly. At the beginning of Town Hall meetings there will be an open forum where members may make motions to add agenda items to the agenda. Additionally, members may make these motions in absentia by sending their motions to the secretary via email before the beginning of the meeting. In this case, the secretary will make the motions on behalf of the absent members. The motions must be seconded by another member to be added to the agenda.

Article IX: Finances

Student Council shall not have any dues.

Article X: Amendments

The amendments to this constitution shall be made in writing to the membership, a week before the meeting where the amendment will be voted upon. Amendments can be amended by majority vote when quorum is present, before the voting for the amendment starts. When voting for the amendment, quorum should be present and the amendment should receive two-thirds of the present votes to pass. The amended constitution should be made available to all the members and the CoC administration within 48 hours.