

# **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Acting as the voice of all students enrolled at Georgia College & State University, the Student Government Association will actively work to improve the quality of life for the student body, along with the university community as a whole. Believing in the right of self-governance, all students enrolled at Georgia College & State University shall be members of the Student Government Association and be entitled the rights, privileges, and protections thereof.

## **ARTICLE I: Name and Purpose**

### **SECTION A**

The name of this organization shall be Student Government Association of Georgia College & State University. It is recognized that Georgia College & State University is a state educational institution operating under the authority of Board of Regents Policy. Since Board of Regents dictates that each state educational institution has an established student government, the Student Government Association derives its power from the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

### **SECTION B:**

Purpose of Student Government Association:

1. Deal effectively with matters of student affairs.
2. Promote understanding and communication between administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
3. Work with administration in all matters affecting the welfare of Georgia College & State University.

### **SECTION C: Non-Discrimination Policy**

We the Student Government Association, in an effort to uphold the values of our University, do not discriminate on any basis, including but not limited to age, race, color, gender, religion, non-religion, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin.

## SECTION D: Statement on Hazing

Concurring with the broader institution of Georgia College & State University, the Student Government Association does not tolerate any form of hazing and will act accordingly if any such case should arise. Hazing is defined by our University as “any action taken or situation created, intentionally or unintentionally, on or off-campus, which could be reasonably expected to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, ridicule, violation of University rules and regulations, violation of the laws or policies of the parent organization, and/or violation of any local, state, or national laws.” In accordance with our mission on this campus to better the overall experience of the student body, the Student Government Association seeks to set the standard where hazing is concerned. Any member of the Student Government Association who participates in any form of hazing shall be placed on immediate suspension pending investigation and their case shall be referred to the institution’s Judicial Board.

## **ARTICLE II: Executive Branch**

### SECTION A: Executives

1. The Executive Officers of the Student Government Association shall be chosen by the direct vote of the student body no later than the last full week of February and will begin a full year term the following May 15<sup>th</sup>.
2. The time between the certification of the elections and May 15<sup>th</sup> shall be used as a transitional period, during which the Officers-elect shall work with the current Executive Officers to create a smoother transition.

### SECTION B:

There shall be elected from among the students of Georgia College & State University the following Student Government Association Executive Officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

### SECTION C: Additional Executive Officers

1. The President Pro Tempore shall be a current Senator and must be nominated and then elected out of and by the Senate.
2. The Chief of Staff shall be appointed by the newly elected Student Government Association President, no later than 30 days after the spring election, and be confirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority approval of the current Senate.

## SECTION D: Executive Officer Qualifications

1. The President must have completed forty (40) semester hours, thirty (30) of which shall have been completed at any branch of Georgia College & State University. The individual must have been at least a committee chair or executive officer for one semester in good standing.
2. The Vice President must have completed thirty (30) semester hours, twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of Georgia College & State University. The individual must have been at least a Senator for one semester in good standing.
3. The Secretary must have completed twenty-four (24) semester hours, twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of Georgia College & State University. The individual must have been a member of any branch of Student Government Association for at least one semester in good standing.
4. The Treasurer must have completed twenty-four (24) semester hours, twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of Georgia College & State University. The individual must have been a member of any branch of Student Government Association for at least one semester in good standing.
5. The President Pro Tempore must have completed twenty-four (24) semester hours, twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of Georgia College & State University. The individual must have been at least a Senator for one semester in good standing.
6. The Chief of Staff must have completed twenty-four (24) semester hours, twenty (20) of which shall have been completed at any branch of Georgia College & State University. The individual must have been a Senator or a staff member for at least one semester in good standing.
7. To be qualified as an executive officer, in addition to all other specified requirements, a student must have, and maintain, an institutional grade point average of 2.75 or higher. If an officer's GPA falls below that requirement, he or she shall be automatically removed from office at the end of the current academic semester.
8. Good judicial standing with the university shall be a necessary requirement for all students running for executive offices. Furthermore, if any executive officer should fall into poor judicial standing with the university they shall be subject to a mandatory hearing with the Student Judicial Board. The Judicial Board will then have the authority to remove any executive officer who the justices deem unfit to hold office due to his or her judicial standing by way of a simple majority vote.

## SECTION E: Succession to the Executive Office

1. In the event of a President's inability to serve, through removal from office, death, resignation, withdrawal, or lack of qualifications, the Vice-President of the Student Government Association shall become President. If the Vice-President does not meet the qualifications of President the succession will go down the line in the following order of succession to the Presidential Office: President Pro Tempore, Secretary, Treasurer.
2. In the event of a Vice-President's inability to serve, through removal from office, death, resignation, withdrawal, or lack of qualifications, or filling the position of President, the President Pro Tempore shall serve the remainder of the term.
3. In the event of the Secretary, Treasurer, or President Pro Tempore inability to serve, through removal from office, death, resignation, withdrawal, or lack of qualifications, a qualified replacement shall be chosen among the Senate members,

by the Student Government Association President and shall be approved by two thirds (2/3) majority of the Senate, to serve the remainder of the term.

#### SECTION F: Executive Board Meetings

1. The Executive Board shall hold meetings determined by the President.
2. The President shall have the power to call special Executive Officer meetings outside of the regular scheduled meeting.
3. The Executive Board Meetings must have quorum to conduct business. Quorum is defined as two-thirds (2/3) of all Executive Board members.

#### SECTION G: Stipends

1. The Executive Officers of the Student Government Association will receive a stipend that shall be split into installments, the number of which shall be decided on by the financial advisor.
2. No stipend shall increase or decrease without a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate.

#### SECTION H: Cabinet Positions

1. The President and President-Elect of the Student Government Association shall have the power to create executive cabinet positions that shall be charged with the operation and management of executive tasks and programs.
2. The President or President-Elect shall propose the creation of new cabinet positions to the Senate for confirmation with a simple majority vote.
3. The President or President-Elect shall appoint any full time student in good academic standing that he or she sees fit to fill a created position, and shall also retain the power to remove a student from a position at any time for any reason.

4. A cabinet position, created by the President and confirmed by the Senate, shall expire at the end of each academic year; the executive branch must re-create each cabinet position each year if the President-Elect desires to retain staff operations in a recurring manner.
5. The Senate shall have the power to review a cabinet position at any time, and upon a (2/3) vote may eliminate a cabinet position.

### **ARTICLE III: Legislative Branch**

#### **SECTION A:**

The Legislative Officers of the student body shall be chosen by the direct vote of the student body by the first twenty-eight (28) days of fall semester, and will begin their one year Senate term upon taking the "Oath of Office" as a senator.

#### **SECTION B: Membership**

1. The membership of the Senate shall be apportioned by class status.
2. There shall be five senators from each of the following classes: freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior.
3. In addition, there shall be five (5) at-large positions, which shall be open to any qualified candidate regardless of class rank.
4. Classification shall be determined by the number of credit hours earned at the time of the senate election.

#### **SECTION C: Qualifications**

1. Any enrolled student at Georgia College & State University with a cumulative grade point average of 2.75 or higher, and in good academic standing, and in good judicial standing shall be eligible to run for election or be appointed to the Senate. If a senator's GPA falls below the requirement, he or she shall be automatically removed from office at the end of the current academic semester.
2. If any senator should fall into poor judicial standing with the university, they shall be subject to a mandatory hearing with the Student Judicial Board. The Judicial Board will have the authority to remove any senator who the justices deem unfit to hold office, due to his or her judicial standing, by way of a simple majority vote.

#### **SECTION D: Organization**

1. The Vice President of the Student Government Association shall preside as President of the Senate.

2. The Secretary of the Student Government Association shall serve as the Clerk of the Senate. In the absence of the Secretary, the Treasurer shall serve as the Clerk of the Senate.
3. The Senate shall follow Robert's Rules of Order in all instances where the Constitution and By-Laws do not apply.

#### SECTION E: Quorum

The Senate must have quorum to conduct business. Quorum is defined having a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of all Senators in attendance, excluding Senators with excused absences.

#### SECTION F: Legislation

1. Bills – A bill is defined as legislation that is a request for funding from the Student Government Association by an approved Recognized Student Organization. No bill shall be passed unless it is by the Senate. The Senate shall adopt no Bill until all affected individuals or organizations have had at least one (1) week to be heard. All Bills must be referred to the Appropriations Committee in either their original or amended form for a minimum of one week before a vote may be taken.
2. Resolutions – All other legislation is defined as a resolution. No resolution shall pass unless it is by the Senate.
3. Before enactment, all legislation must be:
  - a) Read before the Senate.
  - b) Entered into the minutes.
  - c) Passed by a Senate majority vote.
  - d) Signed by the Student Government Association President.
4. All legislation that passes through the Senate must then be presented to the Student Government Association President.
  - a) The President can approve the legislation by signing it.
  - b) The President can return it with objections in the form of a line item veto.
  - c) The President can veto the entire bill or resolution and return it to the Senate within two (2) weeks after presentation through the Clerk of the Senate
5. Every resolution, having been enacted by the Senate and approved by the Student Government Association President, shall be submitted to the President of Georgia College & State University.
6. Senate Action of vetoes:

- a) Legislation vetoed by the Student Government Association President can be overridden by a two-thirds (2/3) majority votes of Senators.
- b) Line item vetoes by the Student Government Association President can be overridden by a two-thirds (2/3) majority votes of Senators

## SECTION G: Committees

There shall be six (6) standing committees of the Student Government Association: Senate Rules & Oversight, Student Travel Fund, Appropriations, Diversity and Inclusion, University Student Affairs, and Campus Issues

### 1. Standing Committees:

- a) University Student Affairs –Shall consider matters relating to both academic and non-academic services provided to Georgia College students.
- b) Senate Rules and Oversight –Shall consider matters concerning the function and operation of the Student Government Association.
- c) Diversity & Inclusion - Shall consider matters concerning the recruitment and inclusion of underrepresented students on campus.
- d) Student Travel Fund –Shall provide limited financial support to students who are presenting scholarly research or a project presentation at an academic conference or workshop.
- e) Campus Issues –Shall consider issues that are of immediate and prominent importance not encompassed by the Student Services Committee.
- f) Appropriations –Shall foster a working relationship and host a meeting with the sponsoring senator(s) of a bill and the benefiting RSO, so that the committee and associated parties might then review the bill in question.

### 2. Committee Chairs:

- a) Shall be a Senator.
- b) Shall be appointed by the Student Government Association President, except for the Senate Rules & Oversight, Academic Travel Fund, and Campus Issues Committees that shall be chaired by the President Pro Tempore, Treasurer, and Vice President of the Student Government Association respectively.
- c) The Chair shall have the authority to create and dissolve subcommittees of their respective standing committee. The creation of a subcommittee or ad-hoc committee of a standing committee, and the creation of a chair thereof, does not

meet the satisfactory requirements as outlined for President in Article 2, Section D, Number 1.

d) The Chair shall have the authority to appoint a Vice-Chair, a Secretary, and Directors from committee members to head specific areas.

#### SECTION H:

1. If the seat of a Senator shall be vacated by resignation, academic probation, recall election, impeachment, non-enrollment at Georgia College & State University, or otherwise, the Student Government Association President shall nominate a candidate for appointment to the vacant Senate seat in a timely fashion.

2. The Student Government Association President shall then present their choice for nomination to the Student Government Association Vice President, who will approve or deny the initial nominee.

3. Once the Student Government Association President and Vice President have selected a candidate for appointment, the Senate shall vote to confirm the appointment of the nominee to the vacant Senate seat in the next regularly scheduled Senate session.

a. The Student Government Association Vice President has the right to submit any

documents, forms, or writings to the Senate as justification for the candidate's confirmation to the vacant Senate seat.

b. A roll call vote must be taken in which a simple majority of the Senate must vote

to confirm the candidate to the vacant Senate seat.

c. Should a candidate not receive a simple majority of the Senate vote, it is the responsibility of the Student Government Association President and Vice President to select a different candidate for confirmation to the vacant Senate seat in a timely fashion.

d. The newly confirmed Senator shall take office during the next regularly scheduled Student Government Association meeting, after taking the "Oath of Office."

#### SECTION I: Senator Absence Policy

1. In the event that a senator has accumulated 3 unexcused absences from scheduled meetings and/or events, the senator shall be removed from office.



2. Mandatory meetings include regular meetings of the Senate, and a particular senator's scheduled committee meetings, both standing and ad-hoc committees.
3. Additionally, committee chairs may make events directly associated with their committee mandatory for the members of their committee.
4. Senators may be excused from mandatory events, or regular meetings of the Senate, provided that they contact the Clerk of the Senate and present a valid excuse at least 24 hours in advance.
5. Senators wishing to be excused from committee meetings, or events made mandatory by their committee chair, must appeal to their respective committee chair for an excused absence.
6. Any senator may propose an event to be mandatory for the Senate at large; however, said proposition must pass a simple majority roll call vote of the Senate.
7. Senator requirements such as office hours, events or tasks mandated by the executive board not mandated by the constitution, and events voted to be mandatory by the senate body shall be considered one "strike", where two "strikes" is equivalent to an unexcused absence.

## **ARTICLE IV: Judicial Board**

### **SECTION A:**

The Student Judicial Board is responsible for hearing cases through an educational peer review process. The process, which ensures fundamental fairness and appropriate

sanctions, determines student accountability for alleged violations of the Student Code of Conduct and Honor Code in any manner.

### **SECTION B:**

Composition of the Judicial Board:

1. There will be two (2) Student's Judicial Boards that shall operate simultaneously throughout each academic school year.
2. Each board shall be equal in power.
3. Each Board shall consist of five (5) student members, one (1) of which must be an appointed chief justice, and two (2) faculty advisors.
4. The SGA President shall appoint all student positions comprising the Judicial Board.

## SECTION C:

Members shall be students of Georgia College & State University in good academic standing and disciplinary standing when they are appointed and during their term in office. They must have a grade point average of 2.75 or higher and in good academic standing. Judicial Board members shall serve one calendar year from the time they are appointed in the fall semester of each academic year.

## SECTION D:

The Student Government Association President shall appoint ten (10) student members. Since the Student Judicial Board exists primarily to provide an educational peer review process, at least six (6) of the student members must be at the undergraduate level.

## SECTION E: Jurisdiction:

1. The Judicial Board shall interpret all policies of the Student Government Association and have original jurisdiction in any cases concerning Student Government Association policies, laws, impeachment hearings, and activities, including elections.
2. The Judicial Board will also handle disputes concerning approved Recognized Student Organizations.

## SECTION F:

The Judicial procedures are outlined in the *Student's Rights, Responsibilities and Disciplinary Procedures* Policy Statement.

## **ARTICLE V: Removal from Office**

### SECTION A: Impeachment Guidelines:

1. Any officer, defined as a Senator and Executive Officer, may be removed from office for violation of this Constitution, the Bylaws, Georgia College & State University Code of Conduct, Georgia College & State University Honor Code, and the Board of Regent's Policy.
2. A member of the Student Government Association can bring up the impeachment charges. It is highly suggested to bring charges through the Senate Rules and Oversight Committee, but it is not a requirement.
3. To present the Articles of Impeachment, the Senate shall move into a Special Session under Robert's Rules of Order.

4. The Vice President shall preside over the Special Session. If the Vice President is under the impeachment articles, the President shall preside over the Special Session.
5. The President Pro Tempore shall present the case to the Senate in the case of an executive impeachment. In the event a senator, including the President Pro Tempore, is under the impeachment charges, the chief justices will present the case to the Senate.
6. A two thirds (2/3) vote shall impeach an officer of the Student Government Association.
7. The Articles of Impeachment are presented to the Judicial Board, and a majority vote can remove the officer from their position.
8. Officers removed shall be ineligible for a stipend and will be removed from office. Removed officers will not be allowed to run for a Student Government Association office for a full calendar year from the date impeached.

#### SECTION B:

##### Rights of Officers undergoing Impeachment:

1. A letter containing the Articles of Impeachment and the trial date of the impeachment one week prior to the trial.
2. The right to resign before the impeachment trial begins.
3. The right to witnesses on his/her behalf and cross-examine witnesses.
4. The right to counsel who must be a member in good standing of the Senate. 5. The right to remain silent with no guilt implied by said silence.

#### **ARTICLE VI: Finance**

##### SECTION A:

Upon completion of the Executive elections, the newly elected Student Government Association President and Treasurer shall submit to the Senate, for approval by a simple majority, a budget income allocated by the Student Activities Budget Committee.

##### SECTION B: Expenditure of Money

1. No money shall be expended from the treasury except in accordance with the appropriations made by statute, nor shall any obligation for the payment of money be incurred except as authorized by statute.

2. The Student Government Association Treasurer shall be responsible for the supervision of the budget and the collection and disbursement of its funds as required by law.
3. The official deposits of funds shall be in keeping with policies of the Georgia College & State University Vice President of Business and Finance.
  - a) The Student Government Association of Georgia College & State University will not fund any event or organization that is expressly prohibited by the Student Activities Budget Committee guidelines of Georgia College & State University.
  - b) The Student Government Association will give priority of the following:
    - i. An event which will benefit, or which is open to all Georgia College & State University students.
    - ii. An event that will not occur unless funding is allocated within a short period of time following notice of the upcoming Bill.

## **ARTICLE VII: Elections**

### **SECTION A: Qualifications for Voting**

1. All voters must be a current Georgia College & State University student and must present a validated university student identification card.
2. If a validated university student identification card is not present, a certificate from the records office will be sufficient.

### **SECTION B: Rights of Voters**

1. All voters are entitled to vote once in every Student Government Association Executive election, Senate election, Constitutional amendment, and any other matter deemed by the Student Government Association or the administration of Georgia College & State University to require a student body vote.
2. All voters are entitled to a secret ballot vote.

## **ARTICLE VIII: Amendments**

### **SECTION A:**

Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by the Student Senate or by petition of the student body as prescribed in this Constitution.

1. Any amendment proposed by the Student Senate must be passed twice at any two regular meetings by a two-third (2/3) majority of the membership.
2. A roll call vote shall be taken on proposed amendments.
3. After the second legislative action, the proposed amendment must be approved by a simple majority of the student body.
4. Technical Amendments which correct items such as grammar, spelling, numbering, cross-references, or otherwise corrects manifest typographical or other similar errors shall not be subject to the requirements of Section A (1,3) of this article. No technical amendments can alter meaning in context; whereas meaning is defined as the significant common purpose or underlying truth of the sentence or statement of under Number 4 of Article 8. Such changes shall require a single roll call vote of the Student Senate passing with a two-third (2/3) majority of the membership. The determination of whether an amendment is a minor or technical amendment shall be according to the judgment of the Vice President of the Student Government Association.

## **ARTICLE IX: Initiative, Referendum, and Recall**

### **SECTION A: Initiative**

The students of Georgia College & State University reserve to themselves the power known as initiative. Such power shall include the ability to propose legislation and amendments to this Constitution.

1. Proposed legislation may be placed on the ballot of the next regularly scheduled election by a petition signed by ten (10) percent of the Milledgeville campus student body.
2. Proposed constitutional amendments may be placed on the ballot of the next regularly scheduled election by a petition signed by fifteen (15) percent of the Milledgeville campus student body.
3. The Student Senate can send with 2/3rd majority vote, any proposed legislation or constitutional amendment to be ratified by the student body at any time.
4. Both legislation and amendments must be approved by a simple majority of those voting.
5. Legislation and amendment must be passed under regular Constitutional provisions.

### **SECTION B: Referendum**

The students of Georgia College & State University reserve to themselves the power known as referendum by submitting to the student body for their approval or rejection.

1. A referendum may be placed on the ballot box of the next regularly scheduled election by a petition signed by ten (10) percent of the student body.
2. No petition shall enlist the support for more than one item at a time.
3. There shall be no limit set as to the number of times an issue can be placed before the qualified electorate in a referendum.
4. Measures approved by a simple majority of those voting will have the same force as legislation passes under regular constitutional provisions.
5. Measures rejected by a simple majority shall be null and void.

#### SECTION C: Recall

A recall election for any elected Student Government Association officer may be called by a petition signed by students eligible to vote for that position.

1. The number of signatures collected must total at least twenty (20) percent of the total number of eligible voters in the officer's election.
2. A special election shall be held in which those eligible to vote shall decide whether to maintain said officer in the position in question.
3. A majority of votes cast is required to remove said member.
4. Individual Student Government Association officers may only be subject to one recall election per semester.

#### **ARTICLE X: Implementation**

##### SECTION A:

This Constitution shall be placed into effect after being approved by the study body in accordance with the amendment procedure as described in the existing Constitution and the University Statutes.