

# The Constitution of the Student Government Association of the University of West Georgia



## Preamble

*We, the students of the University of West Georgia, establish this Constitution in order to form a transparent, efficient, and responsible student government; to represent and unify the student community; to decide and act responsibly for the students interest, and to work with the faculty, staff, and administration of the University; therefore we hereby establish the Student Government Association of the University of West Georgia and adopt this Constitution.*

**(Ratified on March 20, 2015)**

The name of this organization at the University of West Georgia shall be the Student Government Association of the University of West Georgia, hereinafter abbreviated as SGA.

## Article II – Purpose

The purpose of SGA shall be to represent the student body of the University of West Georgia in all university matters, while creating legislation and developing programs and activities of value for the student body.

## Article III – Student Body

1. Membership in the Student Body shall be composed of students currently enrolled at the University of West Georgia.
2. Any enrolled student at the University of West Georgia shall be entitled to vote in student elections.

# Article IV – Membership

The Student Government Association shall be composed of the Executive Council, the Senate, and the Judiciary.

1. **The Executive Council** shall consist of the President, Executive Vice President, Vice President of Budget and Finance, Vice President of Student Life and Chief Justice.
2. **The Senate** shall consist of all elected or appointed Senators, First Year Freshmen Senators and the Executive Vice President.
3. **The Judiciary** shall be composed of the Chief Justice and the Associate Justices.

*Neither membership in, nor services provided by, the organization will be denied to anyone on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, sex, veteran status, sexual orientation, or ancestry.*

1. **The qualifications for the Executive Council are as follows:**
  - a. Qualifications
    - i. Minimum cumulative institutional GPA of 2.6.
    - ii. Enrolled as a full time student, unless exempted from full-time status by law or university policy.
    - iii. No student conduct history of pending violations.
    - iv. Must have been a previous member of SGA.
    - v. Must be a matriculating student in the fall and spring semester.
2. **Qualifications for a Senator or Associate Justice are as follows:**
  - a. Qualifications
    - i. Minimum cumulative institutional GPA of 2.3
    - ii. Enrolled as a full time student, unless exempted from full-time status by law or university policy.
    - iii. No student conduct history of pending violations.
    - iv. At least 12 completed semester hours
3. **The qualifications for a First Year Freshmen Senator are as follows:**
  - a. Qualifications
    - i. Maintain a cumulative institutional GPA of 2.3
    - ii. Enrolled as a full time student, unless exempted from full-time status by law or university policy.
    - iii. No student conduct history of pending violations.
    - iv. Must be in their first year as student in a higher learning institution

# Article V – Offices

## 1. **President**

- a. The President shall be elected by a plurality vote of the student body in a general election.
- b. Powers & Responsibilities:
  - i. Serves as the official representative of the student body in University matters.
  - ii. Serves as the liaison between students, faculty, staff, administration, and the community.
  - iii. Shall make all appointments with the majority approval of the Senate.
  - iv. Serves on the University System Board of Regents Student Advisory Council and shall have the authority to appoint Student Advisory Council delegates.
  - v. Formulate the annual goals and vision of SGA in consultation with the Executive Council.
  - vi. Issues Executive Orders concerning implementation of SGA policy as defined in the Bylaws.
  - vii. Coordinates with the Vice President of Budget and Finance to jointly frame and propose the SGA Budget.
  - viii. Calls and chairs meetings for the executive council and serves as a voting member.
  - ix. Appoints students to University, Faculty Senate, and Fee Committees
  - x. Approves or vetoes legislation (not pertaining to Constitutional changes) from the Senate.
  - xi. Fulfills additional responsibilities as stated in the By-laws.

## 2. **Executive Vice President**

- a. The Executive Vice President shall be elected by a plurality vote of the student body in a general election.
- b. Powers & Responsibilities:
  - i. Serves as a voting member of the Executive Council.
  - ii. Chairs Senate meetings and possess a tie-breaking vote in the Senate.
  - iii. Serves on behalf of the President in his or her absence.
  - iv. Ensures that Senate meetings are conducted according to Robert's Rule of Order.
  - v. Fulfills additional responsibilities as stated in the By-laws and as the President may request within constitutional reason.

**3. Vice President of Budget and Finance**

- a. The Vice President of Budget and Finance shall be elected by a plurality vote of the student body in a general election.
- b. Powers & Responsibilities:
  - i. Serves as a voting member of the Executive Council.
  - ii. Establishes the goals for the Budget and Finance Committee.
  - iii. Serves as the Chief Financial Officer of SGA.
  - iv. Submits semimonthly reports to the Senate of the SGA budget.
  - v. Ensures SGA follows University Financial Policies.
  - vi. Coordinates with the President framing and proposing of the SGA Budget.
  - vii. Frames and proposes the SGA Budget to the Senate in conjunction with the President.
  - viii. Fulfills additional responsibilities as stated in the By-laws and as the President may request within constitutional reason.

**4. Vice President of Student Life**

- a. The Vice President of Student Life shall be elected by a plurality vote of the student body in a general election.
- b. Powers & Responsibilities:
  - i. Serves as a voting member of the Executive Council.
  - ii. Establishes the goals and oversees the budget for the Student Life Committee and Student Life Department.
  - iii. Promotes students' interests between SGA and the departments of UWG.
  - iv. Serves as the Chief Officer for enacting of SGA events, programs and activities.
  - v. Reports on general issues affecting the Student Body that does not fall under any other departments.
  - vi. Fulfills additional responsibilities as stated in the By-laws and as the President may request within constitutional reason.

## **5. Chief Justice**

- a. The Chief Justice shall be elected by a plurality vote of the student body in a general election.
- b. Powers & Responsibilities:
  - i. Serves as a voting member of the Executive Council and the Judiciary.
  - ii. Shall be charged with the power of Judicial Review of legislation for compliance with the Constitution and Bylaws in conjunction with the Associate Justices, with the exclusion of Impeachment trials.
  - iii. Serves as the Chief Officer of the Judiciary.
  - iv. Presides over appeals of impeachment.
  - v. Oversees and chairs the annual Bylaws Committee's review process.
  - vi. Administers the oath of office to all members of SGA in accordance with the By-laws.
  - vii. Charged with the power of interpretation of the Constitution, Bylaws, and legislation in conjunction with the Associate Justices.
  - viii. Appoints a Vice Chief Justice, out of the appointed Associate Justices, to serve on behalf of the Chief Justice in his or her absence.
  - ix. Fulfills additional responsibilities as stated in the By-laws.

## **6. Associate Justices**

- a. The Associate Justices shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Senate and should always be even in number
- b. Powers & Responsibilities:
  - i. Serves as the voting members of the Judiciary.
  - ii. Assists in Judicial Review of legislation for compliance with the Constitution and Bylaws in conjunction with the Chief Justice.
  - iii. Charged with the power of interpretation of the Constitution, Bylaws, and legislation in conjunction with the Chief Justice.
  - iv. Fulfills additional responsibilities as stated in the By-laws

## **7. Senators**

- a. The Senators shall be elected by a plurality vote of the student body in a general election or in the event of a vacancy, shall be recommended by the Executive Council and confirmed by the Senate.
- b. Number of Senators:
  - i. There shall be at most one Senator per every 500 matriculating students.
- c. Powers & Responsibilities:
  - i. Serves as the voting members of the Senate.
  - ii. Serves on at least one SGA committee.
  - iii. Serves on appointed University Committees.
  - iv. Fulfills additional responsibilities as stated in the By-laws.

## **8. First Year Freshmen Senators**

- a. Shall be recommended by the Executive Council and confirmed by the Senate.
- b. Number of Senators:
  - i. There shall be at most one First Year Freshmen Senator per every 500 First Year Freshmen Students.
- c. Powers & Responsibilities:
  - i. Serves as the voting members of the Senate.
  - ii. Serves on at least one SGA committee.
  - iii. Serves on appointed University Committees.
  - iv. Fulfill additional responsibilities as stated in the By-laws.

# **Article VI - Advisor**

The advisor for the Student Government Association is selected by the UWG Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and fulfills the roles of an advisor as set forth in the yearly UWG Student Organization Handbook.

# Article VII - Meetings

## 1. **Senate Meetings**

- a. The Senate shall hold regular open meetings on Thursday at 3:30 p.m. unless there is an extenuating circumstance or the Senate votes to cancel the meeting at the meeting prior.
- b. SGA meetings shall not extend beyond 5:00 p.m. unless an extension is approved by a majority vote of Senate.
- c. Special meetings of the Senate may be called by the 3/5 approval from the Executive Board with 48 hours of prior notice stating the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
- d. A quorum of the Senate shall be 50% +1 of voting members. Quorum is necessary to conduct a meeting of the Senate.
- e. The Rules contained in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Senate meetings in all cases, where they are not inconsistent with the Constitution, the SGA Bylaws, or any other rules of order that the Senate may wish to adopt. Non-voting members shall not be permitted to make motions.
- f. The Executive Vice President shall preside over Senate meetings, and vote in the case of a tie.
- g. Each SGA committee must meet at least twice a semester or as deemed necessary by the Executive Vice President and the Chair of the Committee.

## 2. **Executive Council**

- a. The Executive Council shall hold meetings at the discretion of the President.
- b. A vote of the Executive Council is only official if 50% plus 1 of the Executive Council's membership is present.

## 3. **Judiciary**

- a. The Judiciary shall hold meetings at the discretion of the Chief Justice.
- b. A quorum of the Judiciary shall be two Associate Justices plus the Chief Justice.



## Article VIII - Legislation

1. All legislative power granted herein shall be vested in, and exercised by the University of West Georgia Student Government Senate.
  - a. Legislation should be related (but not limited to) addressing University matters that affect the Student Body, the general wellbeing of the University of West Georgia, and the governance functions and concerns of the Student Government Association.
  - b. All members of the Senate have the authority to introduce legislation.
2. The President shall sign bills into law if the President approves. Should the President choose to exercise veto powers, the Senate shall vote again on the vetoed legislation, without changes, and such legislation shall become law upon a 2/3 vote in the Senate to overrule the President's veto. If the President does not sign legislation or veto legislation within five (5) business days the legislation becomes law.
3. All Legislation expires at the end of the UWG fiscal year, with the exception of revisions to the SGA By-laws
4. Only in the event of an extenuating circumstance shall the Executive Council implement emergency email voting. The President shall give the Senate a twenty-four (24) hour notice in the event of an emergency vote via email. The voting period shall last for a period of twenty-four (24) hours. All votes not cast shall be considered abstentions.

## Article IX – Summer Commission

A Summer Commission, which shall have limited authority as specified in the By-laws, shall be established to carry on the work of SGA during the summer semester. The Summer Commission shall not vote to alter the Constitution or By-laws, or purpose of the SGA. However, they may hold meetings to discuss potential revisions. No vote on Constitution and By-laws may take place.

# Article X- Removal from Office

1. **Power of Impeachment**
  - a. Any member of SGA may institute impeachment proceedings.
  - b. Actions of Impeachment must be submitted to the Senate.
  - c. The Senate shall have the power to hear all actions of impeachment against any member of SGA.
  - d. No member shall be impeached without a three-fourths (3/4) concurrence of the entire voting membership of the Senate.
  - e. Impeachment shall result in the removal from office and disqualification to hold any office in SGA until the next regular election.
2. **Appeal of Impeachment**
  - a. Any person impeached by the Senate may appeal to the Judiciary.
  - b. To reverse impeachment, a majority vote of the Judicial Council is required.
  - c. If the Judicial Council is unable to reach a decision the verdict of the Senate shall stand.
  - d. The decision of the Judicial Council is the final word on impeachment.
3. **Special Conditions**
  - a. The Chief Justice and Justices shall appeal to the Executive Council.

# Article XI – SGA Bylaws

1. **General Information**
  - a. The SGA Bylaws are subsidiary rules used to supplement this Constitution. Bylaws cannot alter or contradict the Constitution. Such actions would require an amendment to the Constitution as outlined in Article XII.
2. **Procedures to Create or Amend Bylaws**
  - b. By-laws to this Constitution may be adopted and changed upon the affirmative vote of 2/3 of the Senate. Proposed revisions to the By-laws shall be reported to the Senate at least one week prior to the meeting at which the Senate will vote upon the revisions. Legislation concerning the bylaws shall be subject to presidential approval or veto.

# Article XII – Ratification Clause and Amendments to the Constitution

1. **Constitutional Approval**
  - a. Approval of the Constitution shall be majority vote.
  - b. Upon approval of the Senate this Constitution shall be submitted as a referendum to the Student Body for a period of one week.
  - c. Approval shall be a majority of the voting Student Body.

- d. This Constitution shall come into effect at the swearing in of the SGA President.
- 2. **Upon approval of the Constitution**
  - a. The elected President shall become the President.
  - b. The elected Vice President shall become the Executive Vice President.
  - c. The elected Chancellor of the Treasury shall become the Vice President of Budget and Finance.
  - d. The elected Speaker of the Assembly shall become the Vice President of Student Life.
  - e. The appointed Chief Justice shall become the Chief Justice.
  - f. The elected Senators shall become Senators.
- 3. **Exception to Article IV**
  - a. In the qualifications for the Executive Council it states a student “*Must be a matriculating student in the fall and spring semester*” This voided in the first year of this constitution due to conflict with the previous constitution.
- 4. **Constitutional Supremacy**
  - a. Upon ratification of this Constitution, all previous governing Constitutions and Bylaws shall become null and void.
- 5. **Procedures to Amend Constitution**
  - a. Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted upon the affirmative vote of 2/3 of the Senate. Proposed Amendments to this Constitution shall be reported to the Senate at least four weeks prior to the meeting at which the Senate will vote upon the Amendment. Legislation concerning the Amendments to this Constitution shall not be subject to presidential approval or veto. With the affirmative vote of the senate the Amendment shall be presented to the student body in a duly authorized referendum. Approved amendments shall become part of the Constitution if ratified by a majority vote of the voting student body voting in favor of the amendment. The amendments are effective upon ratification.
- 6. **Editorial Changes**
  - a. Editorial changes such as grammar, formatting, and non-substantive rewording may be proposed by any member of the Senate at an official Senate meeting and are approved and ratified by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting.

*We the undersigned below hereby declare that this Constitution for the Student Government Association of the University of West Georgia has passed the senate of the Student Government Association on the 5th day of March in the year of 2015. We now officially submit this Constitution to the Student Body of the University of West Georgia.*

Sandra K. Santiago  
(President of SGA)

Solomon Seaborn  
(Vice President)

Jonathan M. James  
(Chief Justice)

Chance J. Grzesik  
(Speaker of the Assembly)

Sumiya Culler  
(Chancellor of the Treasury)

Randall J. Striblin  
(Parliamentarian)

Hannah Sorrels  
(Majority Leader)

Chris Geiger  
(Advisor to SGA)

Alicia Caudill  
(Dean of Students)

*Ratified by the Student Body of the University of West Georgia in a regular election on the 20th day of March in the year of 2015.*