

The Constitution of the Student Government Association Of the University of Alabama in Huntsville

We, the students of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, in order to provide ourselves with organization through a governing body, to provide a forum for the free and open expression of student ideas and opinions, to provide liaison from the students to University administration, to instill a sense of community on campus, and to create an atmosphere conducive to academic achievement, do hereby establish this Constitution for the student body of the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Article I – Organization

Section 1. All powers vested in the student body of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, hereinafter referred to as UAH, to govern themselves shall be vested in this Student Government Association of UAH, hereinafter referred to as the SGA.

Section 2. The SGA shall divide its delegated powers, duties, and functions amongst three separate and autonomous branches; to be referred to as the *Legislative Branch*, the *Executive Branch*, and the *Judicial Branch*, respectively.

Article II – Membership, Qualifications to Hold Office and Voting

Section 1. All enrolled, degree-seeking students of the University of Alabama in Huntsville shall be considered members of the SGA.

Section 2. Members of the SGA who meet the eligibility requirements for election as outlined in Article VII, Section 2, are hereby permitted to hold and seek offices within the SGA.

Section 3. All members of the SGA, including its officers shall be entitled to vote in all external SGA elections.

Section 4. In the election of Senators representing a specific college, members are only permitted to vote for candidates from the college in which they are enrolled.

Article III – The Executive Branch

Section 1. All executive powers of the SGA are hereby vested in the aforementioned *Executive Branch* of the organization. The *Executive Branch* shall be responsible for the enforcement and execution of the will of the SGA.

Section 2. The President

- 1) The *President* shall be elected through an annual election, by a simple-majority of the student body voting in the election.
- 2) The *President* shall have the following powers and duties:

- a) To preside over the *Executive Branch* of the SGA.
- b) To serve as the official representative of the Student Body in all matters of direct relevance to the University.
- c) To call for special sessions of the *Senate*, with a minimum of ninety-six (96) hours notice to be given to the members of the body prior proposed beginning of the meeting.
- d) To address the student body on an annual basis, concerning the “State of the University.”
- e) To recommend to the *Senate* for their consideration such measures as he or she shall judge necessary and expedient.
- f) To propose the creation or dissolution of Cabinet positions within the *Executive Branch*, subject to the confirmation of the *Senate*.
- g) To nominate individuals to serve as Directors of the specific Cabinet positions, or to ask for the recall thereof, with the confirmation of all nominations to be approved by a simple-majority of the *Senate*.
- h) To schedule meetings of the *Executive Branch*, facilitate the coordination thereof, and provide a means of excusal for members who are unable to attend such meetings.
- i) To function as co-signatory on the withdrawal of funds from any and all financial accounts held and maintained by the SGA.
- j) To recognize ambassadors to the SGA, who have been duly designated by on-campus student organizations.
- k) To veto *Senate* legislation within thirteen (13) days of passage, to include, at a minimum, a written explanation for the action.
- l) To serve as a member of the *SGA Tribunal*.
- m) To post and maintain a minimum of fifteen (15) consistent, office hours per week.

Section 3. The Vice-President

- 1) The *Vice-President* shall be elected in conjunction with the *President*, by a simple-majority of the student body voting in the election. The *Vice-President* shall function as the chief voice of the *Executive Branch* in the *Senate* of the SGA, as well as in the *Faculty Senate* of the University. In addition, the *Vice-President* shall be responsible for the coordination of legislation, and managing a system whereby legislation may be introduced for debate to the *Senate*, subject to the Bylaws of the thereof.
- 2) The *Vice-President* shall have the following powers and duties:
 - a) To attend and serve as the presiding officer at all meetings of the *Senate*.
 - b) To serve in the capacity of *President*, in the event of the temporary absence, removal, or resignation of the *President*.
 - c) To serve as the official representative of the SGA to the *Faculty Senate* of the University.
 - d) To attend all meetings of the *Executive Branch*, except those sessions to which he or she has received excusal from the *President*.

- e) To propose the creation of special committees within the *Senate*, for the purpose of pursuing a singular or temporary interest, subject to simple-majority confirmation by the *Senate*, and upon the condition that the committee's charter will expire at the end of the *Vice-President's* term in office.
- f) To oversee and regulate the system under which an article of legislation must be introduced to the *Senate* for debate, subject to the Bylaws of the *Senate*.
- g) To serve as a member of the *SGA Tribunal*.
- h) To work in conjunction with the *Scribe* of the *SGA*, to distribute all necessary copies of legislation and documentation to the members of the *Senate*.
- i) To excuse members of the *Senate* from attendance to a specific meeting, with excusal of the members being dependent on the consent of either the *Consul* or the *Parliamentarian* of the *Senate*.
- j) To post and maintain a minimum of ten (10) consistent, office hours, per week.

Section 4. The Vice-President of Financial Affairs

- 1) The *Vice-President of Financial Affairs* shall be nominated by the *Tribunal* and confirmed by a simple-majority of the *Senate*. The *Vice-President of Financial Affairs* functions as the chief-financial-officer of the *SGA*, and should be familiar with a wide variety of accounting techniques and practices. In addition, it is the duty of the *Vice-President of Financial Affairs* to oversee all financial accounts maintained by the *SGA*.
- 2) The *Vice-President of Financial Affairs* shall have the following powers and duties:
 - a) To maintain and update the *SGA's* official budget.
 - b) To submit a monthly report on the status of all *SGA* financial accounts to the executive members
 - c) To have co-signature authority on all *SGA* financial accounts.
 - d) To work with the Director of Organizational funding (DOF) on financial matters
 - e) To work with the President in the creation of a budgetary proposal, to be submitted to the Dean of Students, and ultimately to the *Senate* for its approval.
 - f) To post and maintain a minimum of fifteen (15) consistent, office hours per-week.

Section 5. The Director of Organizational Funding

- 1) The *Director of Organizational Funding* shall be nominated by the *Tribunal* and confirmed by a simple-majority of the *Senate*. The *Director of Organizational Funding* functions as the chief-financial-officer for *SGA* funding for student organizations, and should be familiar with a wide variety of accounting techniques and practices. In addition, it is the duty of the *Director of*

Organizational Funding to assist the Vice President of Finance with the oversight of all student organization financial accounts maintained by the SGA.

- 2) The *Director of Organizational Funding Affairs* shall have the following powers and duties:
 - a) To report directly to the Vice President of Finance
 - b) To maintain and update the SGA Student Organizational Funding Budget
 - c) To submit a report on the status of all student organization funding transactions to the Vice President of Finance to be included in the SGA budget
 - d) To have co-signature authority on all SGA student organization financial accounts.
 - e) To assist the Vice President of Finance with the annual update and submission of the *Finance Handbook*.
 - f) To post and maintain a minimum of seven (7) consistent, office hours per week

Section 6. The Scribe

- 1) The *Scribe* shall be nominated by the *Tribunal* and confirmed by a simple-majority of the *Senate*. The purpose of the *Scribe* is to act as the official clerk of the SGA, to create a record of the events that have transpired on the floor of the *Senate*, and to distribute all meeting materials and official correspondence of the SGA.
- 2) The *Scribe* shall have the following powers and duties:
 - a) To attend all meetings of the *Senate*, excepting those instances of absence for which he or she has been provided an excusal.
 - b) To record and produce minutes for each meeting of the *Senate*; which shall include at a minimum: the order in which motions were made, the individual(s) responsible for a given motion, and the voting record thereof. It shall also be the duty of the *Scribe* to compile and distribute a copy of the minutes to the general membership of the *Senate*, prior to the subsequent meeting of the body.
 - c) To call roll at the initiation and conclusion of all Senate meetings, and in doing so it shall also be the function of the *Scribe* to assist the *Vice-President* in making sure that a quorum is present and checking that all Senators have not exceeded their permitted number of absences from meetings.
 - d) To read aloud to the entire *Senate* all minutes, articles of legislation, and other general business items brought before the body, with the exception of those instances in which the reading of a given item has been waived.
 - e) To distribute a copy of the minutes, pending articles of legislation, and any official SGA correspondence to the membership of the *Senate*.
 - f) To post and maintain a minimum of one (1) consistent, office hours per week.

Section 7. The Executive Cabinet

- 1) The *Executive Cabinet* shall be composed of Executive-Departments, to be proposed by the President, and confirmed by a super-majority of the *Senate*.
- 2) Each Executive-Department shall be managed by a Director, to be nominated by the *President*, and confirmed by a simple-majority of the *Senate*. All Cabinet Directors shall serve under the supervision and discretion of the SGA President.
- 3) The *Vice-President* shall act as the scribe for all meetings of the *Executive Cabinet*.

Section 9. The Tribunal

- 1) The SGA *Tribunal* shall be composed of the *President*, the *Vice-President*, and the *Consul* of the *Senate*.
- 2) It is the responsibility of the *Tribunal* to nominate qualified individuals to serve in any vacated positions within *Executive*, excepting those of the *President* and *Vice-President*. It is also the duty of the *Tribunal* to nominate qualified individuals to serve in open positions in the *Senate*, and the *Supreme Court* of the SGA.
- 3) In order for an individual to be nominated by the *Tribunal*, the body must vote by two-thirds majority in the affirmative for the nomination.
- 4) All decisions of the *Tribunal* shall be recorded and made public.

Section 10. It shall be the duty of any official in the *Executive* Branch to abide by this constitution, the policies of the university, the laws of the state of Alabama, and those of the national government of the United States of America.

Article IV – Legislative Branch

Section 1. All legislative powers of the SGA shall be vested in the *Senate* thereof.

Section 2. The membership of the *Senate* shall be composed of twenty-five (25) Senators, elected from the various colleges, twelve (12) Senators to be elected from the various undergraduate rankings, and one (1) graduate Senator.

- a) The seats of the College Senators shall be composed of twenty-five (25) senators selected by proportional representation, to be based upon the relative spring enrollments of the Colleges of Administrative Science, Engineering, Liberal Arts, Nursing, and Science, with no college having less than two (2) Senators.
- b) Senators from the undergraduate rankings shall be composed as follows:
 - 1) Three (3) Freshmen

- 2) Three (3) Sophomores
- 3) Three (3) Juniors
- 4) Three (3) Seniors

Section 3. The Senate shall have the following powers and duties:

- a) To have regular meetings presided over by the *Vice President*.
- b) To construct a working set of bylaws, which shall, at a minimum, contain the functions and duties of the specific committees of the *Senate*, and provisions for operation thereof.
- c) To pass articles of legislation, of both the binding and non-binding varieties.
- d) To override presidential vetoes, with passage of the motion requiring a super-majority.
- e) To elect a *Consul* by simple-majority of the membership.
- f) To create and delegate enumerated powers to standing committees.
- g) To appropriate the seats of the college *Senators* amongst the various colleges, with each college having no less than two (2) seats.
- h) To confirm nominations made by the *Tribunal*, with passage of such nominations requiring a simple-majority, except for those instances in which it has been enumerated otherwise.
- i) To confirm the SGA budget, as proposed and amended, by the *President*, the *Vice-President of Financial Affairs*, and the Dean of Students, with passage of such requiring a simple-majority.
- j) To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution, the University, or by any Department or Officer thereof, to this SGA.

Section 4. Each Senator shall have the following powers and duties:

- a) To attend all regular, scheduled meetings of the *Senate*, except in those instances in which the Senator has received excusal from attendance.
- b) To have one (1) vote in all legislative matters.
- c) To sponsor articles of legislation.
- d) To serve as a member of at least one (1) standing committee.
- e) To attend all scheduled meetings of the standing committee(s) that he or she serves upon, except in those instances in which the Senator has received excusal from attendance.
- f) It shall be the duty of each official in the *Senate* to abide by this constitution, the policies of the university, the laws of the state of Alabama, and those of the national government of the United States of America
- g) To hold at least one (1) office hour per week.

Section 5. The Consul

- 1) The *Consul* shall be an internally elected member of the *Senate*, by a simple-majority of the membership. The *Consul* functions as the President Pro-tempore of the *Senate*.
- 2) The *Consul* shall have the following powers and duties:
 - a) To nominate the chairs of the various *Senate* committees, both standing and special, with confirmation dependent on a simple-majority of the *Senate*.
 - b) To preside over the *Senate* in the absence of the *Vice-President*.
 - c) To serve in conjunction with the *Vice-President* as the consenting officer in all cases of excusal from attendance.

Article V. The Supreme Court

Section 1. All judicial powers of the SGA, and those delegated therein by the University, shall hereby be vested in the *Supreme Court* of the SGA.

Section 2. The *Supreme Court* shall be composed of an even number of *Praetors* and, to be nominated by the *Tribunal* and *Parliamentarian*, and confirmed by the *Senate*, with a minimum of one representative to be chosen per college, with equal representation among the various colleges. All members of the *Supreme Court* are required to have a total of at least twelve hours of credit from UAH before becoming eligible to serve on the high court.

Section 3. The following shall be the powers and duties of *Supreme Court*:

- a) To have the right to declare articles of legislation passed by the Senate and executive orders as unconstitutional, with such declaration requiring the consensus of a super-majority of the *Praetors* to vote in favor of the actions.
- b) To record and make public all decisions of the court.
- c) To hear student grievances concerning the operations and conduct of the business of the SGA and to rule upon the validity of those grievances by a simple-majority vote of the *Praetors*.
- d) To hear the appeals concerning the passage of articles of impeachment, with a vote to overturn a bill of impeachment requiring a super-majority of the *Praetors* to be in favor of doing so.

Section 4. A *Praetor* of the *Supreme Court* shall have the following duties:

- a) To be knowledgeable of [the Student Code of Conduct], the Constitution of the SGA, the Bylaws of the Senate, and any other relevant documents.
- b) It shall be the duty of each *Praetor* to uphold this constitution, the policies of the university, the laws of the state of Alabama, and those of the national government of the United States of America.

Section 5. The Parliamentarian

- 1) The *Parliamentarian* shall be nominated by the *Tribunal* and confirmed by a simple-majority of the *Senate*. The *Parliamentarian* is the internal expert on issues arising under the established floor procedures of the *Senate*. It is also the duty of the *Parliamentarian* to coordinate external, SGA elections as an unbiased party.
- 2) The Parliamentarian shall have the following powers and duties:
 - a) To attend of all meetings of the *Senate*.
 - b) To be responsible for the coordination and management of all external, SGA elections.
 - c) To create a committee for the purpose of assisting with all external, SGA elections, not to be composed of any individual seeking elected office.
 - d) To be familiar with all issues arising under the Constitution of the SGA or the Bylaws of the *Senate*.
 - e) To serve as the source of interpretation should a disagreement arise during the meeting of the *Senate* on issues relating to the floor procedures thereof.
 - f) To serve in conjunction with the *Vice-President* as the consenting officer in all cases of excusal from attendance.

Section 6. The Office of the Parliamentarian

- 1) The *High Praetor* is the chief officer of the *Supreme Court*, and shall be nominated by the *Tribunal* as such, and confirmed by a simple majority of the *Senate*.
- 2) The *High Praetor* shall have the following powers and duties:
 - a) To preside over the Supreme Court.
 - b) To preside over the impeachment proceedings of any member of the *Executive Branch*.
 - c) To deliver the opinions of the court on any and all cases heard therein.
 - d) In order for an individual to be eligible to hold the office of *High Praetor*, he or she must be a sitting Praetor at the time of the nomination.

Article VI. Impeachment

Section 1. All individuals holding a constitutionally defined position within the SGA may be impeached.

Section 2. An article of impeachment may be brought against any office holder in the SGA, with sponsorship of the article requiring two members of the *Senate*.

Section 3. In cases of impeachment, except those of members of the *Executive Branch*, the Vice-President shall serve as the presiding officer. In those cases of impeachment involving members of the *Executive Branch*, the *High Praetor* shall preside.

Section 4. A super-majority of the *Senate*, shall be required for the passage of an article of impeachment.

Section 5. Each official of the SGA, shall in the event of his or her impeachment, have the right to appeal the impeachment to the *Supreme Court* of the SGA.

Section 6. The following shall serve as the reasons for which any member of the SGA may be impeached:

- a) Malfeasance or misfeasance in office.
- b) Failure, at the time of election, to meet the enumerated qualifications to be eligible to hold office [with impeachment for such offenses being immediate].
- c) Willful violation of the Constitution, the policies of the University, the laws of the State of Alabama, or those of the any official entity of the government of the United States.
- d) Failure to perform the enumerated duties of office.

Article VII. Elections

Section 1. The terms of all SGA officials, except those of the executive branch, shall expire at the conclusion of one year following the spring elections to be held during the last full week of classes in the month of March. The elected terms of the Executive Branch shall expire at the conclusion of the April meeting of the University Of Alabama System Board Of Trustees. The elected terms of all current officers and members shall be extended from the time of the passage of this document until such a time as new elections may be held in compliance with the aforementioned requirements.

Section 2. Eligibility

- a) *Executive Branch* officials shall be required to have at the time of their election and to maintain during their terms of office a semestral Grade Point Average of no less than two and one-half (2.50). All other officials shall be required to have at the time of their election and to maintain during their terms of office a semestral Grade Point Average of no less than two and one-fourth (2.25).
- b) To be eligible to hold the office of the *President*, and therefore the offices of *Vice-President* and the *Consul*, the candidate must have a minimum of twenty-four (24) credit hours, with at least twelve (12) credit hours from UAH, and shall have served in the SGA for at least one (1) semester or served as an Executive for two (2) semesters.

Article VIII. Amendments

Section 1. From time to time, amendments to this Constitution may become necessary for reasons apparent at the time of consideration of the amendments. There shall be two methods by which amendment to this Constitution may be proposed:

- a) A petition may be brought by one-tenth (1/10) of the student body to the SGA President, who shall then call a special session of the *Senate* for consideration of a bill of amendment. The amendment shall pass if a super-majority of the *Senate* concurs with the amendment stated in the petition.
- b) The Senate may choose to pass a bill, requiring at least two sponsors, to amend this Constitution, with passage thereof by a super-majority vote.

The Student body shall vote on all proposed amendments to the UAH SGA Constitution, with ratification of such amendments requiring a hyper-majority of the members to vote in the affirmative.

Article IX. Ratification

Section 1. This Constitution for the Student Government Association of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, shall be considered ratified when:

- a) A super-majority of the members of the presiding Legislature, who choose to vote, vote in the affirmative; abstentions shall not be included in the final vote total.
- b) A hyper-majority of all students who are eligible to vote and do so in a special election shall vote in the affirmative on the question of passage of this Constitution or any proposed amendment thereto, and
- c) The Dean of Students and the President of The University of Alabama in Huntsville shall affix their signatures on the final document.

Section 2. This constitution shall go into effect at the beginning of the academic year 2012-2013 academic year. This constitution shall serve as the official governing document of the Student Government Association of the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Section 3. All legislation that was binding upon the SGA prior to the ratification of this Constitution shall be declared null and void, eighteen (18) months after ratification.

Definitions

- A **simple-majority** shall be no fewer than one more than one-half of all members present and voting;
- A **super-majority** shall be no fewer than two-thirds of all members present and voting;
- A **hyper-majority** shall be no fewer than three-fourths of all members present and voting.
- **Co-Signatory Authority** shall be interpreted so as to require all officials that have been granted such authority by this constitution to approve of any and all expenditures of SGA funds, before the disbursement of such funds.

General authority in the governance of students enrolled at any campus of The University of Alabama System is vested by law in the Board of Trustees. See Alabama Constitution of 1901, Article 14, Section 264; Section 16-47-34, Code of Alabama (1975, as amended). The Board has delegated responsibility for supervision of student affairs to the respective campus Presidents. It is within the context of such authority given to the President at this institution, and by his or her further delegation to the Vice President for Student Affairs, and the subsequent delegation thereof to the Student Government Association, that this Constitution must be viewed.

Colleges and universities have traditionally encouraged the organization of students into campus-wide associations for the purpose of certain self-governance activities. Such associations can facilitate student interaction, enhance student life, focus institutional attention on matters of student concern, and provide a learning laboratory for leadership and management skills. For these and related reasons, a Student Government Association (SGA) has been recognized at this University. So that the foregoing benefits may be realized the University has granted certain authority to the SGA, as outlined in a charter document. By approving the currently proposed SGA Constitution, the University continues to recognize the prerogative of the organization, its units and members, to function in the ways stated therein. This recognition is extended with the express stipulation that the prerogatives and privileges granted shall remain subject to the overall authority of those University officials on whom legal responsibility for student affairs rests and that SGA actions and decisions are subject to reasonable review and modification by appropriate University officials.

The funds in SGA accounts are normally considered to be State funds. Expenditures of SGA funds are therefore subject to the same kind of controls and limitations as are applicable to other University expenditures.

We, the undersigned, by affixing our signatures to this document, do hereby ratify this Constitution for the Student Government Association of The University of Alabama in Huntsville and agree to the above statement regarding the authority of the SGA.

Ratified: mm/dd/yyyy