

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

**W**E, 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 foster a better understanding between University administration, faculty, and students; to train ourselves in the basic tenets of democratic government; to prepare ourselves to be active and engaged citizens; and to create an atmosphere conducive to academic achievement, do hereby establish this Constitution of the Student Government Association.

## ARTICLE I – ORGANIZATION

**Section 1. Name** The name of this organization shall be “The Student Government Association of The University of Alabama in Huntsville,” hereinafter referred to as the SGA.

**Section 2. Membership** All enrolled, degree-seeking students of The University of Alabama in Huntsville shall be considered members of the SGA.

### Section 3. Distribution of Powers

- 1) The SGA shall divide its delegated powers, duties, and functions between two distinct branches to be referred to as the Legislative Branch and the Executive Branch.
- 2) Legislative powers shall be vested in *Student Senate* of The University of Alabama in Huntsville, hereinafter referred to as the *Senate*. Executive powers shall be vested in the *Student Body President*, hereinafter referred to as the *President*.

### Section 4. Recognition of Authority

- 1) It is recognized that general authority over The University of Alabama in Huntsville is vested by law in the Board of Trustees. Therefore, any part of this Constitution or of any law passed under the authorization thereof which is found to conflict with any law of the State of Alabama, or with any rule set by the Board of Trustees, or of The University of Alabama System Chancellor or their representatives, or policies set by the President of the University or the Dean of Students, shall be null and void from the time of its enactment.
- 2) The funds in SGA accounts are state funds and are collected from student fees. Expenditures of SGA funds are therefore subject to the same kind of controls and limitations as are applicable to other University expenditures.

## ARTICLE II – QUALIFICATIONS TO HOLD OFFICE AND VOTE

**Section 1.** 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 2.** All members of the SGA, including its officers, shall be entitled to vote in all external SGA elections.

**Section 3.** In the election of Senators representing a specific college or class, members are only permitted to vote for candidates from the college or class in which they are enrolled.

### **ARTICLE III – THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

**Section 1.** All executive powers of the SGA are hereby vested in the *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, with a simple-majority requiring one (1) more than one-half (1/2) of the votes to be in the affirmative.
- 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 to the proposed beginning of the meeting.
  - d) To address the student body on an annual basis concerning the "State of the Student Body."
  - 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 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. 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 attend all meetings of the *Executive Branch*, except those sessions to which he or she has received excusal from the *President*.
  - d) 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.
  - e) 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*.
  - f) To serve as a member of the *SGA Tribunal*.
  - g) To work in conjunction with the *Secretary* of the SGA to distribute all necessary copies of legislation and documentation to the members of the *Senate*.
  - h) To excuse members of the *Senate* from attendance to a specific meeting, with excusal of the members being dependent on the consent of the *Speaker of the Senate*.
  - i) To maintain a minimum of ten (10) consistent office hours per week.

### **Section 4. The *Treasurer***

- 1) The *Treasurer* shall be nominated by the *Tribunal* and confirmed by a simple-majority of the *Senate*. The *Treasurer* 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 *Treasurer* to oversee all financial accounts maintained by the SGA.

- 2) The *Treasurer* shall have the following powers and duties:
  - a) To oversee the finances of the SGA.
  - b) To maintain and update the SGA's official budget.
  - c) To submit a monthly report on the status of all SGA financial accounts to the executive members.
  - d) To have co-signature authority on all SGA financial accounts.
  - e) To work with the *Director of Organizational Funding* on financial matters.
  - f) 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.
  - g) To maintain a minimum of five (5) 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 *Treasurer* with the oversight of all student organization financial accounts maintained by the SGA.
- 2) The *Director of Organizational Funding* shall have the following powers and duties:
  - a) To report directly to the *Treasurer*.
  - 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 *Treasurer* to be included in the SGA budget.
  - d) To have co-signature authority on all SGA student organization financial accounts.
  - e) To handle application and paperwork for student organization funding requests.
  - f) To serve as chair of the Student Organization Allocation Committee.
  - g) To maintain a minimum of seven (7) consistent office hours per week.

#### **Section 6. The *Secretary***

- 1) The *Secretary* shall be nominated by the *Tribunal* and confirmed by a simple-majority of the *Senate*. The purpose of the *Secretary* 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 *Secretary* 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 *Secretary* 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 assist the *Vice President* in calling roll at the beginning and conclusion of all Senate meetings to ensure quorum is present and that all Senators have not exceeded their permitted number of absences.
  - d) To read aloud to the entire *Senate* all minutes, articles of legislation, and other general business items brought before the body, excepting 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*.

### **Section 7. 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 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.

- 3) In the event that the *Parliamentarian* wishes to run for election, they must resign their position before the election occurs.

### **Section 8. The Tribunal**

- 1) The SGA *Tribunal* shall be composed of the *President*, the *Vice President*, and the *Speaker of the Senate*.
- 2) It is the responsibility of the *Tribunal* to nominate qualified individuals to serve in any vacated positions within the *Executive Branch*, 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*.
- 3) In order for an individual to be nominated by the *Tribunal*, the body must vote by a super-majority in the affirmative for the nomination.
- 4) All decisions of the *Tribunal* shall be recorded and made public upon request.

**Section 9.** 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 *Student Senate*.

**Section 2.** The membership of the *Senate* shall be composed of a total of forty-two (42) Senators representing the Colleges and student rankings.

- 1) The seats of the College Senators shall be composed of twenty-seven (27) Senators selected by proportional representation, to be based upon the relative spring enrollments of the Colleges of Business Administration; Education; Engineering; Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; Nursing; and Science, with no College having fewer than two (2) Senators.
- 2) Proportional allocations of the College Senators are to be adjusted for the Spring election of every even-numbered year.
- 3) Senators from the class rankings shall be composed as follows: three (3) Freshmen, three (3) Sophomores, three (3) Juniors, three (3) Seniors, and three (3) Graduate students.
- 4) The three (3) Freshmen referenced in Article IV, Section 2.2 shall be selected from the *Freshman Forum* branch of the Student Government Association. Freshmen Forum shall be selected through an application process at the beginning of the academic year at the discretion of the *Freshman Forum* Director and a committee comprised of SGA members. All *Freshman Forum* members shall be offered the opportunity to be a voting member at a minimum of one (1) *Senate* meeting throughout their term.

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

- 1) To have regular meetings presided over by the *Vice President*.
- 2) 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.
- 3) To pass articles of legislation, of both the binding and nonbinding varieties.
- 4) To override presidential vetoes, with passage of the motion requiring a super-majority.
- 5) To elect a *Speaker of the Senate* by simple-majority of the membership.
- 6) To create and delegate enumerated powers to standing committees.
- 7) To appropriate the seats of the college Senators amongst the various colleges, with each college having no less than two (2) seats.
- 8) 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.
- 9) To confirm the SGA Budget as proposed and amended by the *President*, the *Treasurer*, and the Dean of Students.
- 10) 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:

- 1) To attend all regular, scheduled meetings of the *Senate*, except in those instances in which the Senator has received excusal from attendance.
- 2) To have one (1) vote in all legislative matters.
- 3) To sponsor articles of legislation.
- 4) To serve as a member of at least one (1) standing committee.
- 5) 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.
- 6) To hold at least one (1) office hour per week.
- 7) 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.

**Section 5. *Speaker of the Senate***

- 1) The *Speaker of the Senate* shall be an internally elected member of the *Senate*, by a simple-majority of the membership.

- 2) The *Speaker of the Senate* 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 – FRESHMAN FORUM**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

- 1) The *Freshman Forum*, hereafter referred to as the *Forum*, shall provide first year students with an opportunity to get involved in the SGA, as they are not eligible to run in Spring elections.
- 2) The *Forum* shall serve as the Freshman Branch of the SGA. *Forum* members shall seek out issues that are important to the Freshman class. The general programming of the *Forum* will be focused on developing members to be active and engaged members of the campus community.

### **Section 2. Membership**

- 1) The *Forum* Director shall open an application for *Freshman Forum* no later than August 1.
- 2) Applicants shall be selected by a committee of SGA officials and led by the *Forum* Director. Appointments to the *Forum* shall be made by the *President*. *Forum* members' terms end at the start of elections.

## **ARTICLE VI – SUMMER PROCEDURES**

**Section 1.** The *Senate* will be required to meet at least once during the summer term. Senators who live farther than a three-hour drive do not have to meet in person but will be required to attend via live video chat or at the *Vice President's* discretion.

**Section 2.** All Executive officers must meet at least once during the summer for a training workshop. This will be planned by the *President* and *Chief of Staff*. Excuses may be accepted at the *President's* discretion.

**Section 3.** All paid executive positions must have an additional training section. It is up to the discretion of the *President* as to when Executive stipends begin.

**Section 4.** As the budget will not be approved by the *Senate* prior to the summer, major financial decisions may be made by the *Tribunal*.

## **ARTICLE VII – IMPEACHMENT**

**Section 1.** All individuals holding a Constitutionally defined office within the SGA may be impeached.

**Section 2.** A bill 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 *Parliamentarian* shall preside.

**Section 4.** A three-fourths (3/4) majority of the *Senate* shall be required for the passage of a bill 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 *Parliamentarian* 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.

**Section 7.** Impeachment proceedings against Senators for the reasons enumerated in Section 6.c and Section 6.d may be expedited at the discretion of the presiding officer in the following manners:

- a) The sponsorship requirements enumerated in Article VII, Section 2 may be waived.
- b) Bills of impeachment may be introduced to the *Senate* as new business at the meeting immediately following the infraction and after an initial reading by the *Rules and Revisions* Committee.
- c) The defendant's voting rights may be immediately suspended upon receiving notice of the pending Bill of Impeachment.
- d) The allotted time to prepare a defense may be reduced to the two (2) days' notice enumerated in Article V, Section 3.2 of the *Senate* Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VIII – ELECTIONS**

**Section 1.** The terms of all SGA officials shall expire on April 30.

### **Section 2. Eligibility**

- 1) All officials shall be required to have at the time of their election and to maintain during their terms of office a semester Grade Point Average of no less than two and one-half (5/2).

- 2) To be eligible to hold the office of the *President*, and therefore the offices of *Vice President* and the *Speaker of the Senate*, 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. *Vice President* needs to serve, in addition, one (1) semester as Senator. Furthermore, the *President* and *Vice President* are required to be enrolled in at least twelve (12) hours at UAH as undergraduate students.
- 3) Every elected student must be enrolled as a full-time student at UAH during his/her term in office (excluding summer term).

## ARTICLE IX – 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. Amendments to this Constitution may be initiated in one of two ways:

- 1) 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.
- 2) The *Senate* may choose to pass a bill, requiring at least two (2) sponsors, to amend this Constitution, with passage thereof by a super-majority vote.

**Section 2.** The Student Body shall vote on all proposed amendments to this Constitution, with ratification of such amendments requiring a hyper-majority of the members to vote in the affirmative, with a hyper-majority requiring three-fourths (3/4) of the votes to be in the affirmative.

**Section 3.** Editorial changes to this Constitution – such as grammatical alterations, formatting, and non-substantive re-wording – may be proposed by any member of the Senate at an official Senate meeting or Senate and are approved and ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting, without a vote by the Student Body.

## ARTICLE X – PERIODIC REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

**Section 1.** This Constitution shall be revisited by a committee of SGA members every two (2) years.

- 1) This shall be comprised of at least five (5) members, with the *Speaker of the Senate* as a mandatory member of the committee—this being established in Article 1, Section 1 of the *Senate Bylaws*.

**Section 2.** The committee shall have the following powers and duties:

- 1) To be responsible for a comprehensive revision of the Constitution.
- 2) To meet at least bi-weekly for one (1) hour until the process is complete.
- 3) To perform agreed upon tasks as decided in committee meetings.

- 4) To update on progress during committee reports of SGA meetings.
- 5) To bring the finished product before the *Senate* to be voted on.

**Section 3.** The passage of any changes to the Constitution shall follow the rules set forth in Articles IX and XI.

## **ARTICLE XI – RATIFICATION**

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

- 1) A super-majority of the members of the *Senate* vote in the affirmative; abstentions shall not be included in the final vote total.
- 2) 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 thereof.
- 3) The Student Government Association *President, Vice President, Speaker of the Senate, and Parliamentarian*, as well as the UAH President and Vice President of Student Affairs, shall affix their signatures on the final document.

**Section 2.** This Constitution shall go into effect upon the approval of a hyper-majority of the voting student body.

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.

Spring, 2017

Reid A. Wilson  
2016-17 SGA President

Robert A. Altenkirch  
University President

Jessica L. Eason  
2016-17 SGA Vice President

T.J. Brecciaroli  
SGA Advisor, Dean of Students

Jared T. Grogan  
2016-17 Speaker of the Senate

Lucas R. McClanahan  
2016-17 Parliamentarian