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 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