

# CONSTITUTION OF THE SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

**W**e, the Undergraduates of Suffolk University, do hereby establish this organization to provide official and representative student governance. We charge to the members of this organization the responsibilities of advocacy, support, and the defense of student rights, as well as the duty of just representation for all Undergraduates of this University. All representatives will act at all times in the best interests of the Undergraduates of Suffolk University, and will maintain good academic standing. We further establish this Constitution and its By-Laws as a means to regulate and enumerate the powers and responsibilities of this Student Government Association. We will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, country of natural origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, parental status, veteran status or disability.

*The Student Government Association therefore seeks to embody the principles of support and progress as its keynote mission.*

## **Article I - Membership of the Student Government Association**

Section 1      There will be multiple types of membership status within the organization:

- A. An elected member is defined as a member who runs and wins a seat in the official Student Government Association election.
- B. An appointed member is defined as any member who is appointed to any seat by any person(s), whether it be a class, or the President of the organization.

Section 2

- A. Any undergraduate student may have full membership in the organization. All members have the right to motion, and all undergraduate students have speaking abilities within the organization.
- B. Members at Large are defined as members who are nominated to the Legislature after attending three meetings, documented by the Vice President. Members at Large may have speaking and motioning rights, but not voting rights, within the general Legislature. Members at Large must serve on at least one (1) standing Committee of the organization, in which they will have voting rights.

- C. Finance Committee Liaisons and SJRB liaisons fall under the position of a Member at Large.

## **Article II - *Legislative Branch and its Powers***

- Section 1      The legislative body will be comprised of a maximum of thirty-nine (39) student Senators, who represent the various cohorts, academic disciplines and student organizations, that comprise our vibrant academic and social community.
  
- Section 2      The legislative body will consist of thirty-six (36) Senators who strictly represent the four class cohorts. Each class will include a Speaker, Justice, Treasurer, and Chair of Class Programs, to be determined by Class Caucus during general meetings. Each class will have nine (9) Senator positions.
  
- Section 3      There shall be three (3) At-Large Senators, who will come from areas of the University, to be determined every year. Before the close of the Spring Semester, SGA must, through a majority vote, decide what Departments or Colleges the University liaisons will come from. The elections for these positions will take place during the Fall Elections. The election process is defined in the Legislative By-Laws of this Constitution.
  
- Section 4      The powers and functions of the Legislature can be, but are not limited to, the following:
  - A. The Legislature will have the power to issue legislation on behalf of the Student Body.
  
  - B. The Legislature will exercise control over, and approve all budgets and requests for funding from any Student Activities Fee, through the Finance Committee and its By-Laws.
  
  - C. The Legislature shall have the authority to recognize students' right to assembly, after approval from the Judiciary.
  
  - D. The Legislature shall follow the legislative process set forth in the SGA Legislative By-Laws.
  
  - E. All powers and functions of the Legislature are subject to procedures set forth within the SGA By-Laws.

### **Article III - Executive Branch**

The duties of the Executive Branch will be to carry out the actions of the Legislature. The Executive Branch will also represent the organization in good manner to the University and the community.

#### Section 1 Executive Membership

A. Executive Membership shall be open to any member of the Student Government Association who has one Semester's experience as an elected voting member, by the time of fulfilling Executive Membership. The nominee must be nominated and seconded by current members to run in the popularly elected Executive Board Elections, which shall happen concurrently with Spring Elections. The elections process and Executive actions are further defined in the Executive By-Laws.

B. If an Executive Board position opens up at any point after the original Executive Election, a Special Election will be held at the earliest possible convenience. In the case of a special election for a vacant Executive Seat, only the Senate will vote, by virtue of a secret ballot process. A member must be nominated, than seconded, whereby the member must then accept or decline. The nomination must then stand one week, at which point the nominee will deliver a speech and take questions from the Senate. The winner is decided by a plurality of the vote in the Senate.

#### Section 2 Elected Executives and Respective Powers

A. The Executive Branch will have access to a Discretionary Account—the amount of which is to be determined by the Legislature during the annual budgeting process.

B. An Executive term shall begin five days after the end of the Spring Semester's Final Examinations, and shall continue to one year after that date.

## Section 3 Executive Positions

### A. The President of the Student Government Association:

- i. will serve as Chief Advocate and spokesperson for the Undergraduate population at Suffolk University.
- ii. will serve as the student's Chief Diplomat for all intercollegiate and University relations.
- iii. will be the official representative of the organization, in meeting with the Trustees, President of the University, Deans, University Vice Presidents, as well as all of the Administrative Council.
- iv. will represent the organization at all of the meetings of the Trustees Student Affairs Committee.
- v. will coordinate the efforts of the Executive Branch.
- vi. will call to order and Chair all Regular, Special, and Executive Board meetings.
- vii. will not vote in the Legislature unless to break a tie.
- viii. shall coordinate all guest speakers of the legislature in conjunction with the Executive Board.
- ix. has the power to create and dissolve all Special Committees.
- x. shall nominate all Committee Chairs, whereby ratification will occur with a 2/3 majority vote of the general assembly.
- xi. shall have the power to call emergency meetings of the Executive, provided that he/she gives at least 24 hours notice, and follows the appropriate steps outlined in the Executive By-Laws.
- xii. shall once a year, give a State of the Organization speech, to be determined by the President at an appropriate time.
- xiii. retains the power to sign all checks in the place of the Treasurer, and will be a signatory on all SGA Accounts.

### B. The Vice President

- i. Shall execute all Constitutional duties of the President, in the case of his/her absence, as Acting President.
- ii. Shall act as the Chief Justice of the Student Judiciary Review Board (SJRB).
- iii. Shall have the power to call all regular, special, and emergency meetings of the Legislature, provided that he/she gives at least 24 hours notice, and follows the appropriate steps and outlined in the Legislative By-laws.

- iv. Will assist the President in all duties and responsibilities of the Executive Board.

#### C. The Secretary

- i. shall record, publish and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings.
- ii. will release press briefs to different areas of the University, as well as other memos, when asked by the Executive.
- iii. shall promote overall SGA awareness and Public Relations.
- iv. shall record and publish all approved changes to the SGA Constitution and the SGA By-Laws.
- v. shall orient and familiarize all new members of the Legislature to the policies, procedures and traditions of the organization.
- vi. shall maintain all organizational archives, including legislation and Committee Reports.
- vii. shall, in consultation with the Executive Board, oversee the daily operation of the SGA office, including maintaining and establishing office policy.
- viii. will be responsible for all members' office hours.
- ix. will serve as the Vice-Chairperson for the Public Relations Committee.

#### D. The Treasurer

- i. shall keep an accurate record of all funds controlled by SGA, and answer all questions regarding SGA fiscal policy.
- ii. will manage, maintain and interpret the Finance Committee's By-Laws.
- iii. shall sign all checks and check requests, and be the primary signatory on all SGA Accounts.
- iv. shall serve as Chair of the Finance Committee, and oversee all budget requests and all requests for funds.
- v. will present Initiative, Fidelity, New Club Funds, and budget requests to the Organization when necessary.

Section 4 Appointed Executive Positions—Committee Chairs

A. Committee Chairs shall Chair and oversee all Committee meetings and actions, and make regular reports to the Executive Board and Legislature.

B. Committee Chairs will have the power to call to order all Committee meetings, at their discretion.

C. To be nominated for a Committee Chair position, the minimum requirement must be at least one (1) semester as a voting legislative member.

**Article IV - Judicial Branch**

The Judicial Branch will settle all disputes between clubs, and verify all materials for Constitutionality, as well as conduct elections for all clubs under the jurisdiction of the Student Government Association.

Section 1 Membership

A. The Student Judiciary Review Board (SJR) will exist with nine (9) Justices, consisting of four (4) class Justices and four (4) SJR Committee Liaisons to be selected by procedures outlined in the Judiciary By-Laws. There will also be a Chief Justice, who will be the Vice President of the Organization.

B. The Board will be Chaired by the Chief Justice. SJR can be called into official session by the Chief Justice with twenty-four (24) hours notice, and up to five (5) days after the close of the academic year, following policies and procedures stated in the Judiciary By-Laws.

Section 2 Powers and Functions of the Student Judiciary Review Board

A. The SJR shall exist to provide interpretation to the SGA Constitution, SGA By-Laws, SGA policies, SGA legislative actions, and to resolve SGA ethical disputes and alleged violations thereof.

B. The SJR is responsible for review and assistance of all club's or organization's Constitutions.

C. SJRB shall hear any and all cases concerning the infringement of the individual club or organization's Constitutions by their general members and Executive Boards.

D. The SJRB shall facilitate and execute all SGA-funded club Executive Board elections, with the exception of SGA.

E. The SJRB will evaluate all submissions for Legislative action, and evaluate all Bills and Amendments for their Constitutionality, within fourteen (14) days of submission.

F. The decision of the SJRB is final in all cases, unless:

i. All cases concerning the removal from SGA office, which will follow the policies, set forth in the Legislative By-Laws of this Constitution, under Article IV.

ii. An appeal must be made within two weeks of delivery of the decision, and can be made to the Assistant Dean of Students and the Director of Student Activities on the basis that the decision was unfair, arbitrary, or without basis. The decision of the Assistant Dean and the Director shall be final.

iii. Actions of The Student Judicial Review Board shall be governed by the Judiciary By-laws.

Section 3 All Polices and Actions of The Student Judicial Review Board shall be governed by the Judiciary By-laws.

### **Article V - Committees of the Student Government Association**

It is the responsibility of the Student Government Association Committees to conduct research, and develop legislation in particular areas of interest to the undergraduate population of Suffolk University. The Chair of the Committee shall have the power to call all Committee meetings with a forty-eight (48) hour notice. All Committees must submit a Semester Report in writing, no later then seven (7) days after the close of the Semester.

Section 1 Committee Membership

A. Each member of the organization must be on a minimum of one (1) standing Committee.

B. Committees will consist of only duly elected and appointed members of the Student Government

Association. All Committee members, in standing and special Committees, FC and SJRB, will have full motion and voting rights within their respective Committee proceedings.

## Section 2 Standing Committees

### A. Finance Committee

- i. The Finance Committee will deal with all matters concerning the allocation of funds to all SGA recognized clubs and organizations, Student Activities Funding, and all accounts of the Student Government Association.
- ii. The Finance Committee will consist of four (4) duly appointed Class Treasurers, and four (4) Finance Committee Liaisons, to be selected by procedures set-forth in the SGA Finance By-Laws.
- iii. The Finance Committee will be Chaired and called to order by the SGA Treasurer.
- iv. The Finance Committee shall have the SGA Program Advisor or designee serve as the Committee Advisor.
- v. Actions of the Finance Committee shall be governed by the Finance Committee By-Laws.

### B. Academics Committee

- i. The Academic Affairs Committee will deal with all academic student concerns, in both the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Frank J. Sawyer Business School.
- ii. There will be a Chair of the Academics Committee for the College of Arts and Sciences, and there will be a Chair for the Sawyer Business School. The Chair or designee of Arts and Sciences will represent the Organization in the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Review Board of the College of Arts and Sciences.

### C. Public Relations Committee

- i. The Public Relations Committee will deal with all matters concerning student involvement with the Student Government Association, and deal with publicity and awareness of SGA actions and events.
- ii. The Chair of the Public Relations Committee will work in a partnership with the Secretary of the Organization, who will always be the Vice-Chair of the Public Relations Committee.

D. Student Affairs Committee

- i. The Student Affairs Committee will deal with all non-academic student concerns and issues related to student welfare including, but not limited to, issues of community, safety, technology, diversity, and quality of life for all undergraduates.
- ii. The Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, or designee, will represent the Organization in the University Technology Committee meetings

E. Housing and Facilities Committee

- i. The Housing and Facilities Committee will deal with all matters concerning the physical property of Suffolk University and the Residence Halls.
- ii. The Chair of the Housing and Facilities committee or designee will represent the Organization on the University Facilities Planning Committee, and Classroom Committee meetings.

E. Special Committees

- i. Special committees will be created at the discretion of the President to solve new and special problems, and concerns that require more specific research and development.
- ii. The aforementioned Committees may be dissolved by the President. The Legislature may overrule the decision of the president by a 2/3 majority vote.

**Article VI - Advisors to the Student Government Association**

There shall be one of three (3) advisors to the SGA, including a Program Advisor, a Faculty Advisor and a Graduate Fellow. In the case of an inability to find or confirm an advisor, the SGA President must file an appeal to the Legislature stating the reason for the absence of such an advisor. The advisors shall undergo an annual review conducted by the Executive Board. All advisors are to be included in Executive Meetings.

Section 1 Program Advisor

- A. The Program Advisor Shall be the Assistant Dean of Students.
- B. The Program Advisor shall advise, or send a designee advisor to the Finance Committee.
- C. The Program Advisor will help to resolve conflicts within the Organization.

D. Will have the SGA president or designee sit in on the graduate selection committee.

E. Act as an Operations Manager for the Organization.

Section 2 Faculty Advisor

A. The Faculty Advisor can be dismissed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Legislature after a fair and adequate hearing, with procedures set forth in the SGA By-Laws.

Section 3 Graduate Fellow Advisor

A. The Graduate Fellow Advisor will be chosen by the Assistant Dean of Students, through their procedures.

B. The Graduate Fellow Advisor will be the advisor to the Student Judiciary Review Board.

C. The Graduate Fellow Advisor will help resolve conflicts within the Organization.

D. The Graduate Fellow Advisor will assist in the daily operations of the Organization.

**Article VII - Jurisdiction of Appendant Organizations**

SGA shall define the jurisdiction of all appendant organizations approved by the Legislature and the Judiciary. This will be in the form of the Club Constitution by the mandated format.

**Article VIII - By-Laws to the Constitution**

The SGA shall maintain By-Laws to this document that regulate and reflect the current state of public and popular opinion. The By-Laws shall act as an appendix to this document and will be considered as part of this Constitution. The By-Laws shall serve as a guide to the operational procedures of the SGA. The By-Laws can be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Legislature. Procedures for amending the By-Laws will be further defined within each set of By-Laws.

Each Committee may establish and maintain its own By-Laws, subject to the regulations and procedures set forth in this Constitution. These laws must be ratified by a two-thirds 2/3 vote of SGA. Furthermore, these By-Laws shall serve as a guide to the operational procedures of the committee.

### **Article IX - Amendments to the Constitution**

This Constitution can be amended to reflect the changing environment of Suffolk University and its Undergraduate population. Any student may propose a Constitutional Amendment at any time under the sponsorship of an elected SGA member, after the student receives one hundred (100) signatures of confirmed registered and matriculated students at Suffolk University. The Office of Student Activities through, their policies and procedures, will validate confirmation of students. The amendment must be ratified by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the SGA Legislature. Amendments will take effect immediately after ratification, unless otherwise stated within the body of the Amendment.

### **Article X - Enacting Clause**

The provisions of this Constitution and its By-Laws, when ratified, shall replace the existing Constitution. The positions of the Senate will take effect at the close of the 2007-2008 Legislative term, providing the procedures for ratifying Constitutional Amendments are followed and confirmed.

**Presiding President, Author of Constitution, Executive and Legislative By-Laws**  
**Jared D. Cain, Class of 2008**

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**Presiding Vice President, Author of Student Judiciary By-Laws**  
**Cordelia R. Pisacane, Class of 2008**

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**Presiding Treasurer, Author of Finance Committee By-Laws**  
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**Christina Panagiotakos, Class of 2010**

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**Presiding Class Senators**

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**Casey Dineen, Class of 2009**

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**Gwyneth Chaffin, Class of 2010**

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