

# 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.** *The Types of Members*

- A. Any undergraduate student may have full membership in the Association. All members have the right to motion, and all undergraduate students have speaking abilities within the organization.
- B. An elected member is defined as a member who runs and wins a seat in an official Student Government Association election.
- C. Members at-large are defined as members who are nominated to the Senate after attending three meetings, documented by the Vice President. Members at-large may have speaking and motioning rights, but not voting rights, within the Senate.
- D. Members at-large must serve on at least one (1) standing committee of the organization, in which they will have voting rights.
- E. Non-elected Senators are defined as members at-large who fill a vacancy in the Senate, following the procedures set forth in the SGA Legislative By-Laws. They will also have full voting rights.
- F. Liaisons are defined as the students who are the non-SGA members of the Student Judiciary Review Board and of the Finance Committee.

## **Article II – The Legislative Branch and its Powers**

### **Section 1. *Function and Breakdown***

- A. The Senate shall be the legislative body of the Student Government Association. It will be comprised of a maximum of forty-five (45) student Senators, who represent the various cohorts and schools that comprise our vibrant academic and social community.

### **Section 2. *Class Senators***

- A. The Senate will consist of thirty-six (36) Senators who strictly represent the four class cohorts. Each class will include a Speaker, a Justice to serve on the Student Judiciary Review Board, and Treasurer to serve on the Finance Committee. They are to be determined by the Class Caucus during general meetings. Each class will have nine (9) Senator positions.

### **Section 3. *Senators at-large***

- A. There shall be three (3) General At-Large Senators and six (6) at-large Senators, who will come from areas of the University that include, but are not limited to, the following: residence life, commuter, NESAD, SBS, CAS, and diversity. The elections for these positions will take place during the Spring Elections. Vacancies in said positions will be filled in the fall semester. The election process is defined in the Legislative By-Laws of this Constitution.

### **Section 4. *Powers and Functions***

- A. The Senate will have the power to issue legislation on behalf of the Student Body.
- B. The Senate 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 Senate shall follow the legislative process set forth in the SGA Legislative By-Laws.
- D. All powers and functions of the Senate are subject to procedures set forth within the SGA By-Laws and are not limited to only those listed.

## **Article III – The Executive Branch**

### **Section 1. *Overview***

- A. 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 2. *Executive Membership***

- A. Executive Membership shall be open to any member of the Student Government Association who has one (1) semester's experience as a Senator, by the time of fulfilling Executive Membership.
- B. The nominee must be nominated and seconded by current members and accept the nomination to run in the popularly elected Executive Board Elections, which shall happen concurrently with

Spring Elections.

- C. The elections process and Executive actions are further defined in the Executive By-Laws.

**Section 3.** *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.
- C. For the purpose of ensuring a good transition, the incoming Executive Board will preside over the last SGA General Meeting of the Spring Semester with the assistance of the outgoing Executive Board.

**Section 4.** *Executive Positions*

A. The President

- i. Shall be the official representative of the organization, including but not limited to, in meeting with the Trustees, President of the University, Deans, University Vice Presidents, as well as all of the Administrative Council.
- ii. Shall coordinate the efforts of the Executive Branch.
- iii. Shall call to order and chair all Regular, Special, and Executive Board meetings.
- iv. Shall not vote in the Senate unless to break a tie.
- v. Shall coordinate all guest speakers of the legislature in conjunction with the Executive Board.
- vi. Has the power to create and dissolve all Special Committees.
- vii. Shall nominate all Committee Chairs, whereby ratification will occur with a 2/3-majority vote of the Senate.
- viii. Shall have the power to call emergency meetings of the Executive, provided that they give at least twenty four (24) hours’ notice, and follows the appropriate steps outlined in the Executive By-Laws.
- ix. Shall once a year, give a State of the Organization speech, to be determined by the President at an appropriate time.
- x. Retains the power to sign all checks in the place of the Treasurer, and will be a signatory on all SGA Accounts, if the Treasurer is not present.

B. The Vice President

- i. Shall execute all Constitutional duties of the President, in the case of their absence, as Acting President.
- ii. Shall act as the Chief Justice of the Student Judiciary Review Board (SJRB).
- iii. In temporary absence of the President, shall have the power to call all regular, special, and emergency meetings of the Senate, provided that they give at least twenty four (24)

hours notice, and follows the appropriate steps and outlined in the Legislative By-laws.

- iv. Shall 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. Shall release press briefs to different areas of the University, as well as other memos, when asked by the President.
- 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,
- viii. Shall be responsible for coordinating and publishing all members' office hours.
- ix. Shall serve as the Vice-Chair for the Public Relations Committee.
- x. In coordination with the President, shall be responsible for the planning of SGA events, including but not limited to the SGA Awards and SGA Retreat.

D. The Treasurer

- i. Shall keep an accurate record of all funds controlled by SGA, and answer all questions regarding SGA fiscal policy.
- ii. Shall manage, maintain and interpret the Finance Committee's By-Laws in consultation with the SJRB.
- iii. Shall sign all checks, check requests, co-sponsorship agreements 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. Shall present Initiative, Fidelity, and budget requests to the Association as well as account balances at every meeting.
- vi. Shall publish the SGA budget in coordination with the Public Relations Committee.

**Section 5.** *Vacancies in Office*

- A. Vacancies occurring in any of the elected offices other than the President shall be officially filled during a special election called for by the President.
- B. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the President, the Vice President will become the President and there will be a special

election to fill the Vice President office. If the Vice President declines to succeed, then a special election shall be held to fill the office of the President for the remainder of the unexpired term.

- C. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President will conduct the election in consultation with the Senior Assistant Dean of Students.
- D. The election procedure for filling the unexpired term of a vacant office shall be the same as the normal procedure for elections.

**Section 6.** *Appointed Executive Positions—Committee Chairs*

- A. Shall Chair and oversee all committee meetings and actions, and make regular reports to the Executive Board and the Senate.
- B. Shall have the power to call to order all committee meetings, at their discretion.
- C. Shall be nominated by the President, having met the requirement of at least one (1) semester as a voting legislative member.

**Article IV – The Judicial Branch**

**Section 1.** *Overview*

- A. The Judicial Branch shall 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 at the request of a club or the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.

**Section 2.** *Membership*

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

**Section 3.** *Powers and Functions of the Student Judiciary Review Board*

- A. The SJRB 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 SJRB is responsible for review and assistance of all clubs 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 will evaluate all submissions for Legislative action, and evaluate all Bills and Amendments for their constitutionality, within fourteen (14) days of submission.
- E. The decision of the SJRB is final in all cases, except when:

- i. Concerning the removal from SGA office, which will follow the policies, set forth in the Legislative By-Laws of this Constitution, under Article V.
- ii. An appeal must be made within two weeks of delivery of the decision, and can be made to the Senior Assistant Dean of Students and the Director of the office of Student Leadership and Involvement on the grounds that the decision was unfair, arbitrary, or without basis. The decision of the Senior Assistant Dean and the Director shall be final.

**Section 4.** *Further Specifications*

- A. The SJRB By-Laws shall govern all Polices and Actions of The Student Judiciary Review Board.

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

**Section 1.** *The Committee Chair(s)*

- A. 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.
- B. The President of the Student Government Association will appoint all committee chairs, which will then be ratified by a 2/3-majority vote of the Senate.
- C. The chair(s) of each 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 than seven (7) days after the close of the Semester to the senate.

**Section 2.** *Committee Membership*

- A. Each member of the Association 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 and Student Judiciary Review Board, will have full motion and voting rights within their respective committee proceedings.

**Section 3.** *The Standing Committees*

- A. The Finance Committee
  - i. The Finance Committee will deal with all matters concerning the allocation of funds to all SGA recognized clubs and organizations, the Student Activities Fund, 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. The actions of the Finance Committee shall be governed by the Finance Committee By-Laws.
- B. The Academics Committee
- i. The Academic Committee will deal with all academic student concerns, in both the College of Arts and Sciences and the Sawyer Business School.
  - ii. There will be a chair(s) of the Academics Committee from either the College of Arts and Sciences or the Sawyer Business School.
- C. The Public Relations Committee
- i. The Public Relations Committee will deal with publicity and awareness of SGA actions and events as well as all matters based on representation of the Association.
  - ii. The SGA Secretary will serve as the vice chair to said committee.
- D. The 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, and quality of life for all undergraduates.
  - ii. The Chair(s) of the Student Affairs Committee, or designee, will represent the Organization in the University Technology Committee meetings.
- E. The Housing and Facilities Committee
- i. The Housing and Facilities Committee will deal with all matters concerning the physical property of Suffolk University including the Residence Halls.
  - ii. The Chair(s) of the Housing and Facilities committee or designee will represent the Association on all university committees relating to Housing and Facilities.
- F. The Diversity Committee
- i. The Diversity committee will deal with all matters and concerns of Suffolk students of diverse backgrounds in order to ensure the Suffolk University Student Government Association is accurately representing its student body.
- G. The Senior Week Committee
- i. The Senior Week committee will deal with all events related to senior week, as well as the PR and ticket sales for any such events.
  - ii. The committee will consist of any appointed chair(s) and is open to all Suffolk University seniors.
  - iii. The senior week chair will work in conjunction with the Student Government Association President and Treasurer to guarantee funds are being used appropriately.

- H. The 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 President may dissolve the aforementioned special committees. The Senate may overrule the decision of the President to dissolve a special committee by a 2/3-majority vote.

**Article VI – The Advisors to the Student Government Association**

**Section 1. Overview**

- A. There shall be four (4) advisors to the SGA, including a Program Advisor, a Faculty Advisor, a Graduate Fellow and finance committee advisor. In the case of an inability to find or confirm an advisor, the SGA President must file an appeal to the Senate stating the reason for the absence of such an advisor. The advisors shall undergo an annual review conducted by the Executive Board.
- B. All advisors may be included in Executive Meetings at the request of the Executive Board.
- C. Any advisor can be dismissed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Senate after a fair and adequate hearing, with procedures set forth in the SGA By-Laws.

**Section 2. The Faculty Advisor**

- A. Shall be the Senior Assistant Dean of Students.
- B. Shall facilitate a network of support for the Executive Board and the Senate.
- C. Shall help to resolve conflicts within the Association.
- D. Shall have the SGA President and Vice President sit-in on the graduate fellow selection committee.

**Section 3. The Program Advisor**

- A. Shall be the Director of the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.

**Section 4. The Graduate Fellow Advisor**

- A. Shall be chosen by the Senior Assistant Dean of Students, through their procedures in conjunction with the SGA President and Vice President.
- B. Shall be the advisor to the Student Judiciary Review Board.
- C. Shall help resolve conflicts within the Association.
- D. Shall assist in the daily operations of the Association.

**Section 5. The Advisor to Treasurer**

- A. Shall be the Director of the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement.
- B. Shall meet with Treasurer on a weekly basis.
- C. Shall advise the Treasurer and finance committee and serve as a liaison to the Program Advisor.
- D. Shall be a signatory on all SGA accounts.



## **Article VII – The Jurisdiction of Appendant Organizations**

### **Section 1. Overview**

- A. SGA shall define the jurisdiction of all appendant organizations approved by the Senate and the Judiciary. This will be in the form of the Club Constitution by the mandated format, subject to the review of the Student Judiciary Review Board.

## **Article VIII – The By-Laws to the Constitution**

### **Section 1. Requirements and Procedure**

- A. 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.
- B. 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 Senate. Procedures for amending the By-Laws will be further defined within each set of By-Laws.
- C. 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**

### **Section 1. Requirements and Procedure**

- A. This Constitution can be amended to reflect the changing environment of Suffolk University and its Undergraduate population.
- B. Any student may propose a Constitutional Amendment at any time under the sponsorship of an elected SGA member, after the student receives seventy-five (75) signatures of confirmed registered and matriculated students at Suffolk University. The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement 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 Senate. Amendments will take effect immediately after ratification, unless otherwise stated within the body of the Amendment.
- C. Any elected member of SGA can propose a constitutional amendment. They need to be sponsored by an elected member and co-sponsored by at least two (2) other elected members. Amendments need to be passed with a 2/3 vote of the Senate,

provided quorum is met.

- D. Any amendments to the Constitution must be ratified no less than after two weeks from its passage by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the Senate.

## **Article X – Constitutional Review**

### **Section 1. Structure and Timeline**

- A. Beginning in the Fall Semester of the 2020-2021 academic year, a special committee shall be convened to examine the effectiveness and relevance of this constitution. This committee will be known as the constitutional review committee and shall be called to order by the current SGA President.
- B. The committee will make any and all necessary changes to this document as the committee sees fit, following the procedures outlined above for new amendments to this constitution.
- C. The committee will continue to meet a minimum of every four years. Any changes are to be made by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the Senate.

## **Article XI - Enacting Clause**

### **Section 1. Enacting Procedure**

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

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