Student Government Association Constitution

We, the student body of Georgia State University, believe that we have the right and collective authority of self-governance and to an enhanced education. In order to preserve and further these aims; to promote understanding and involvement among all the members of the University community; to represent, advocate, and legislate the interest of the student body; to serve as partners in the administrative processes of the University; to protect our right to govern ourselves and accept responsibility for the quality of student life; to be the official voice of students in academic, institutional and campus affairs; we do hereby establish this Constitution for the Georgia State University Student Government Association (SGA).

Article I. Membership and Terms of Office

Section 1. SGA Members
All students currently enrolled at Georgia State University are members of the Student Government Association, hereafter referred to as the SGA, and subject to this Constitution, the SGA Bylaws, the Student Code of Conduct, and University policies.

Section 2. SGA Officers
A. All members of the SGA who are elected or appointed to positions outlined in this Constitution and the SGA Bylaws are considered SGA Officers.
B. SGA Officers can only hold one position within the SGA. SGA Officers must be enrolled at Georgia State University, have at least one semester of college credit resulting in a grade point average, and maintain enrollment and good standing with the University while in office.
C. Unless otherwise stated in this constitution or bylaws all SGA Officers are popularly elected by the members of the student body, and unless otherwise stated in this constitution or bylaws all SGA Officers terms begin on May 1st and end on May 1st of the following year.

Article II. Branches of Government

The SGA is composed of three branches: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial.
A. The authority of the executive branch is vested in the Executive Board.
B. The authority of the legislative branch is vested in the SGA Senate, herein referred to as the Senate.
C. The authority of the judicial branch is vested in the Student Judicial Board, herein referred to as the SJB.

Article III. The Executive Board

Section 1. Composition
The Executive Board is composed of the President, Executive Vice President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Budget and Finance, Vice President of Public Relations, Vice
President of Student Life, Vice President of Student Services, and the President Pro Tempore who serve as voting members. The Chief Justice of the SJB serves as an ex officio member.

Section 2. Authority and Responsibilities of the Executive Board
A. Be the central coordinating committee for the SGA.
B. Ensure legislation passed by the Senate meets original intent when implemented by the SGA or when discussed and drafted into University Policy at the respective University Senate Committee.
C. Meet at regularly scheduled times determined by the President.
D. Vote on SGA matters not requiring Senate approval, to include the allocation of the SGA budget, with the exception of stipends and co-sponsorships.
E. Maintain and regularly update a log of officer activities.

Section 3. Authority and Responsibilities of the President
A. Be the official representative of the student body in University matters.
B. Oversee the Executive Vice President’s duties.
C. Chair the Executive Board and vote only in case of a tie.
D. Set Executive Board meetings at least twice a month.
E. Veto SGA Legislation as he or she deems fit.
F. Order special meetings of the Senate when necessary.
G. Oversee spending of the SGA budget, pending consultation and approval of the Executive Board.
H. Assign additional duties as necessary and proper to the members of the Executive Board.
I. Appoint students to the University Senate and University Committees.
J. Maintain, on average, a minimum of 18 office hours per week while school is in session for the fall and spring semesters.

Section 4. Authority and Responsibilities of the Executive Vice President
A. Assume the duties of the President in his or her extended absence, incapacitation, resignation, or removal from office.
B. Report to and assist the President.
C. Administer and coordinate the Vice Presidents duties in accordance with the SGA Constitution and Bylaws and the Presidents requests.
D. Serve as President of the Senate.
E. Perform duties of the SGA Office Manger
F. Set the calendar of Senate meetings.
G. Call special meetings of the Senate when necessary.
H. Publish annual Senate Journal, which includes minutes of Senate meetings and legislation passed by the Senate during the term.
I. Plan and execute the summer and winter SGA conference and training seminars.
J. Maintain, on average, a minimum of 15 office hours per week while school is in session for the fall and spring semesters.

Section 5. Authority and Responsibilities of Vice Presidents
A. Be a voting member of the Senate and Executive Board.
B. Call special meetings of their committees when needed.
C. Establish goals and budget for their respective committees.
D. Be responsible for the development and follow up of the legislation pertinent to their committee.
E. Report to and assist the Executive Vice President.
F. Be responsible for the development and follow up of the legislation pertinent to their Committee.
G. Maintain, on average, a minimum of 10 office hours per week while school is in session for the fall and spring semesters.

Section 6. Authority and Responsibilities of the Vice President of Academic Affairs
A. Chair the Academic Affairs Committee
B. Identify and investigate University-wide academic issues and draft and propose related legislation to the Senate.
C. Ensure legislation passed by the Senate pertaining to academic affairs reaches the appropriate University Senate Committee.

Section 7. Authority and Responsibilities of the Vice President of Budget and Finance
A. Chair the Budget and Finance Committee.
B. Oversee the budget of the SGA and track all expenditures.
C. Report expenditures and provide a balance sheet as part of required committee reports to the Executive Board and the Senate.
D. Ensure the SGA follows University financial policies.
E. Work with the SGA Advisor and the appropriate university office in matters regarding the SGA budget.

Section 8. Authority and Responsibilities of the Vice President of Public Relations
A. Chair the Public Relations Committee.
B. Oversee all activities regarding SGA public relations.
C. Maintain communications with all media groups in the University.
D. Actively promote a positive image of the SGA throughout the University and greater Atlanta community.
E. Inform the student body of enacted legislation and information concerning SGA activities and programs.
F. Disseminate information from Student Government Association to Student Organizations.
G. Manage the imaging and branding of Student Government Association.
H. Order promotional items and coordinate promotional events.

Section 9. Authority and Responsibilities of the Vice President of Student Life
A. Chair the Student Life Committee.
B. Identify and investigate University-wide issues pertaining to student life and create legislation to address the issue.
C. Liaise with chartered student organizations.
D. Initiate and plan broad student engagement activities and events.
E. Provide support to any student organizations as needed and assist student organizations with financial co-sponsorships as appropriate.
F. Coordinate any Student Government Association Homecoming Activities.

Section 10. Authority and Responsibilities of the Vice President of Student Services
A. Chair the Student Services Committee.
B. Identify and investigate University-wide issues pertaining to student services and create legislation to address such issues.
C. Maintain communications with staff and administrators to address student service concerns.
D. Facilitate feedback from the student body regarding any University Services offered.

Section 11. Authority and Responsibilities of the President Pro Tempore
A. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall be elected from the Senate by the Senate members present and voting. The election will take place by the third (3rd) Senate meeting of the Fall Semester.
B. The President Pro Tempore becomes the acting President of the Senate only in absence of the Executive Vice President and until the return of the Executive Vice President.
C. The President Pro Tempore retains his or her Senatorial position and all duties and responsibilities assigned with it.

Section 12. Authority and Responsibilities of Student Assistants
A. If deemed necessary by the Executive Board the SGA can create or eliminate student assistant positions to be paid out of the SGA budget.
B. The Executive Vice President conducts the necessary interviews for the position(s) and makes the nomination(s) to the Executive Board.
C. A two-thirds affirmative vote by the Executive Board is needed to confirm a nomination to fill a student assistant position.
D. Student Assistants are employees of the SGA and are not considered SGA Officers.
E. Current SGA Officers may not be hired as Student Assistants.
F. Student Assistants report to the Executive Vice President.
G. A Student Assistant may be fired by a majority vote of the Senate or Executive Board.

Section 13. Reports
A. Each Vice President is required to submit electronic or printed reports to the President at the Executive Board meetings. The report will include work completed since the last meeting, a plan of action for the committee and position, and other items related to the committee and position that are significant to the SGA.
B. Each Vice President is required to submit a printed and an oral report to the Senate at all scheduled Senate meetings that will include work completed since the last meeting, a plan of action for the committee and position, and other items related to the committee and position that are significant to the SGA.

Article IV. The Senate
Section 1. Composition
A. The Executive Vice President is the President of the Senate. He or she is the presiding officer of the Senate, but only votes in the case of a tie.
B. The President Pro Tempore fulfills the Senate responsibility of the President of the Senate until the return or replacement of the Executive Vice President.
C. The Senate is composed of one Senator for each one thousand students within each college, with a minimum of two Senators per college. The number of Senate seats is based on the previous fall semester enrollment and is rounded to the nearest thousand.
D. The Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Budget and Finance, Vice President of Public Relations, Vice President of Student Life, Vice President of Student Services and President Pro Tempore are voting members of the Senate.
E. The Senate Clerk is a non-voting member of the Senate responsible for tracking attendance, recording minutes and agendas of the Senate meetings, and distributing any supportive materials to the Senate. The Senate meeting minutes must be distributed at least three calendar days prior to the next scheduled Senate meeting.
1. The Executive Vice President appoints an individual outside of the Senate to serve as the Senate Clerk. The Senate Clerk will serve at the pleasure of the Executive Vice President.
F. The Parliamentarian is non-voting member of the Senate responsible for maintaining decorum and ensuring Senate procedures are conducted in accordance with the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order.
i. The Executive Vice President appoints an individual outside of the Senate to serve as the Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian will serve at the pleasure of the Executive Vice President.

G. The SJB Liaison is an ex officio member of the Senate providing the Senate updates on SJB activities and ensuring legislation and activities of the Senate are in compliance with the SGA Constitution.

Section 2. Senate Authority and Responsibilities
A. Seek student feedback and recommend solutions to student issues.
B. Provide a voice for the student body in the academic and institutional affairs of the University.
C. Approve the establishment of ad hoc committees as needed to perform the functions of the SGA.
D. Establish rules and bylaws for internal operation.
E. Propose legislation on behalf of the student body.
F. Advocate for student rights.
G. Approve appointments to fill SGA vacancies.
H. Remove SGA Officers following the procedures outlined in the Constitution and bylaws.
I. Review the expenditures and balance sheet of the SGA.
J. Review reports from each Senate Committee.
K. To be consulted in proposed stipend increases before their submission to the Student Activity Fee Committee.
L. To call when necessary a special meeting of the Senate upon written petition signed by at least fifty percent (50%) of the members of the Senate.

Section 3. Legislation
A. All motions, with the exception of those pertaining to procedure and appointment, will be presented to the Senate in the form of legislation.
B. All legislation must be proposed during a Senate meeting.
C. All voting members of the Senate have the authority to introduce legislation.
D. Legislation pertaining to actions that can be performed under the authority of the SGA will be labeled Bills. Legislation that proposes an official recommendation of the SGA will be labeled Resolutions.
E. Legislation that is proposed during a specific term of office will be designated by the last two digits of the calendar year and then consecutively numbered.
F. The legislation shall contain a title and the name(s) of the author(s). The body of the legislation shall include the rationale for the proposal and a statement containing the proposed change or recommendation.
G. Legislation that is to be proposed to the Senate must be submitted to the Executive Vice President and the Senate Clerk no later than three calendar days prior to a regularly scheduled Senate meeting and the relevant legislation made available to the Senate members at least two days before its introduction.
H. The author(s) of the legislation can arrange to have the legislation introduced for discussion at the regularly scheduled Senate meeting.
I. Legislation can be voted on in the same Senate meeting as it is introduced or tabled for future consideration.
J. In case of an emergency, the Executive Vice President can allow legislation to be voted on electronically. The votes shall be sent to the Executive Vice President and the Senate Clerk.
K. Legislation that passes the Senate must be signed by the President within five business days. If the President does not sign the legislation within seven days, it is automatically approved.
L. If the President vetoes legislation approved by the Senate, it shall be returned to the Senate at its next regularly scheduled meeting with the President’s objections included separately in writing. The Executive Vice President and the author(s) of the legislation must be notified of the President’s decision to veto the legislation and the objections to the legislation within the five business day approval time.
M. When the Senate receives a vetoed legislation, a motion to reconsider the legislation must be made from within the Senate. The President and the author(s) of the bill may address the Senate during discussion of the legislation.

N. If the motion to reconsider the vetoed legislation fails, the legislation cannot be discussed, and the veto is upheld.

O. The Senate can override the Presidential veto with two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting and is effective without the President’s signature.

P. The President will forward all official legislation to affected bodies and individuals within five business days of approval.

Q. Approved legislation supersedes any relevant legislation that has been previously passed and shall be binding for subsequent Administrations.

Section 4. Standing Committees
A. The Standing Committees of the SGA shall include the Committees of Academic Affairs, Budget and Finance, Public Relations, Student Life, and Student Services.

B. The voting members of the standing committees of the SGA must be members of the Senate.

C. Each committee may recruit and retain ex-officio members from outside the Senate.

D. Active participation in at least one committee is required by each Senator.

E. The Executive Vice President nominates Senators as members of the standing committees. The nominations require a majority affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting at a regularly scheduled Senate meeting and take effect immediately upon approval.

F. The Senators will assist the Vice President chairing the committee with committee business and responsibilities as determined by the aforementioned Vice President.

G. The approval of financial Co-Sponsorships with other student organizations requires an affirmative two-thirds vote of Student Life Committee members present in the meeting.

H. The Budget and Finance Committee will review and approve financial Co-Sponsorships for fiscal soundness following approval by the Student Life Committee and then forward to the SGA Advisor for funding authorization.

Article V. Student Judicial Board (SJB)
Section 1. Composition
A. The Student Judicial Board shall consist of a Chief Justice and fifteen (15) members.

B. The hearing panel shall consist of no less than three (3) justices.

C. The SJB Executive Board shall consist of the Chief Justice, two (2) Assistant Chief Justices, and the lead advocate.

D. A selection Committee shall screen applicants who are seeking membership to the SJB. The Committee shall be composed of the Chief Justice, the Executive Board, and the Judicial Affairs officer.

E. A student must have completed thirty (30) semester hours to be eligible for appointment as a Justice and once in office shall serve until he/she graduates, unless he/she resigns or is removed.

F. No student may hold office concurrently on the SJB and any other branch of the SGA.

G. The faculty advisor shall be available to any student for consultation and referral.

H. The Dean of Students shall serve as advisor to the SJB.

I. The SJB shall hold regular meetings.

J. The SJB shall adopt appropriate rules and procedures for the hearing of cases within its jurisdiction, including rules respecting pleadings, hearing procedures and rights of parties and witnesses. Such rules and procedures shall be approved by two-thirds (two-thirds) vote of the Senate members present and voting. Upon approval by the Senate, the rules and procedures shall be filed in the SGA office and copies made available to students.
Section 2. Authority and Responsibilities of the SJB
A. The SJB shall have the responsibility of reviewing all violations of the Georgia State University Student Code of Conduct referred by the judicial affairs officer.
B. The SJB shall also have the authority to interpret this Constitution and the Bylaws.
C. The SJB shall recommend solution to the Dean of Students in case of disputes between student organizations.
D. The SJB shall recommend solution to the Dean of Students in case of disputes between a student fee-funded organization and students not members of said organization.
E. The SJB shall hear all appeals of Elections Commission decisions and to affirm or reverse such decisions.

Section 3. Chief Justice
A. The Chief Justice shall be nominated by the SJB members and approved by the Senate, and shall serve a one year term.
B. The Chief Justice may remain on the SJB as a justice following the expiration of his/her term as Chief Justice. A Chief Justice may serve more than one term.

Section 4. Chief Justice’s Authorities and Responsibilities
A. Serve as spokesperson for the SJB.
B. Organize regular meetings of SJB members.
C. Organize campus wide recruiting process for new SJB members.
D. Preside over the impeachment hearings of the SGA Senate.
E. Shall appoint an Executive Board.
F. Shall serve an ex-officio member of the SGA Executive Board.

Article VI. Elections
Section 1. Candidate Qualifications
A. Candidates for election must be enrolled at Georgia State University, have at least one semester of college credit resulting in a grade point average, and be in good standing with the University.
B. Candidates running for President and Executive Vice President must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher at the time of election. Candidates running for a Vice President position or President Pro Tempore must have a cumulative GPA of 2.7 or higher at the time of election. Candidates running for Senator must have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher at the time of election.

Section 2. Candidates for President and Executive Vice President
Candidates running for President and Executive Vice President must run in pairs on a single ticket. Voters will cast a single vote for their decided ticket during the election period.

Section 3. President Pro Tempore
Candidates for President Pro Tempore are Senators who are nominated or self-nominated following the election period. Elections to fill the position are conducted by the Senate and take place by the third regularly scheduled Senate meeting of the term.

Section 4. Election Commission
The Commission will consist of a Chairperson and at least four other members, all of whom are nominated by the Executive Board and approved by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present at a regularly scheduled Senate meeting. The Commission supervises and regulates all SGA elections in accordance with the SGA Bylaws.
Section 5. Oath of Office
All officers of the SGA shall be sworn in by the President of the SGA or the Chief Justice of the SJB who shall administer the following oath:

“I, (name) do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the duties and responsibilities entrusted to me by virtue of office and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and enforce the Constitution of the Student Government Association of Georgia State University.”

Article VII. Removal from Office
A. Any officer can bring charges of Impeachment for malfeasance and/or nonfeasance against any SGA Officer by submitting a written statement describing the charges and a petition signed by one-half of the Senators to the Senate, Chief Justice, and the President of SGA.
B. The Chief Justice shall call and preside over an impeachment hearing of the Senate no earlier than 10 business days and no later than 25 business days from the date of receipt of statement and petition by the Chief Justice.
C. If the Chief Justice is being impeached, the Executive Vice President takes over the Chief Justice’s previously mentioned role in the impeachment process.
D. The Senate shall have the power to expel from office, on the grounds of malfeasance and or nonfeasance, any officer of the SGA. This expulsion will be by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting.

Article VIII. Vacancies
Section 1. Nomination Process
A. Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution and Bylaws, the process for fulfilling vacancies is as follows:
   i. Vacancies in the SGA must be advertised and applications for positions available for at least five business days before nominations are made.
   ii. Completed applications must be turned in to the President.
   iii. The President has five business days after the publicity of a vacant position has expired to recommend a nomination to the Senate. If the nomination time requirement is not met by the President, the Executive Board will nominate a candidate.

Section 2. Presidential Vacancy
In the event the President position is vacated, the Executive Vice President will fill the position.

Section 3. Executive Board Vacancy
The President nominates candidates to fill vacancies on the Executive Board following the nomination process. The Executive Vice President shall be informed of the chosen candidate. The Executive Vice President, the President Pro Tempore, and two Senators chosen by the President Pro Tempore form a Senate confirmation committee to interview the candidate prior to the candidate being introduced to the Senate for a confirmation vote. If the vacancy is the Executive Vice President position, the President Pro Tempore shall be informed of the chosen candidate and the same procedure is followed, but with three Senators chosen by the President Pro Tempore. The nomination requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting and takes effect immediately upon approval. The President has ten business days after the publicity of a vacant position has expired to recommend a nomination to the Senate. If the nomination time requirement is not met by the President, the Executive Board will nominate a candidate.

Section 4. President Pro Tempore
Senators can nominate a Senator or self-nominate themselves to fill the vacant President Pro Tempore position. The Senate should vote on the nominations by the second Senate meeting following the day the position is vacated. The Senator who receives the most votes will become the President Pro Tempore.

Section 5. Senate Vacancy
The President nominates candidates to fill vacancies in the Senate following the nomination process. The nomination requires a majority affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting and takes effect immediately upon approval.

Section 6. University Senate Vacancy
The President appoints candidates to fill vacancies in the University Senate and University Senate Committees. The President has five business days after the publicity of a vacant position has expired to make the appointment. If the appointment time requirement is not met by the President, the Executive Board will appoint a candidate.

Section 7. Senate Clerk Vacancy
The Executive Vice President appoints an individual outside of the Senate to serve as the Senate Clerk. The Senate Clerk will serve at the pleasure of the Executive Vice President.

Section 8. Parliamentarian Vacancy
The Executive Vice President appoints an individual outside of the Senate to serve as the Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian will serve at the pleasure of the Executive Vice President.

Section 9. Student Assistant Vacancy
A. If a Student Assistant position becomes vacant the Executive Vice President makes the nominations.
B. The Executive Board can confirm the candidate(s) with a majority vote.

Section 10. Chief Justice of the SJB
The SJB members nominate a SJB member to serve a one year term. The nomination requires a two thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting and takes effect immediately upon approval. Upon completion of the one year term, the Chief Justice may serve additional terms as Chief Justice if nominated and approved or remain on the SJB as a justice.

Article IX. SGA Bylaws

Section 1. General Information
The SGA Bylaws are subsidiary rules used to supplement this Constitution. Bylaws cannot alter or contradict the Constitution. Such actions would require an amendment to the Constitution as outlined in Article XII.

Section 2. Procedures to Create or Amend Bylaws
Proposed bylaws or amendments to the SGA bylaws must be submitted no later than three business days prior to a regularly scheduled Senate meeting to the Executive Vice President and the Senate Clerk, who will then make the proposed bylaws or amendments available to the Senate members at least two business days prior to the scheduled Senate meeting. The bylaw or amendment requires a title, the text of the proposal, what bylaw is to be amended or an explanation of where the new bylaw should be added, and rationale for the proposal. New or amended bylaws are approved for discussion by a simple majority of the Senate members present and voting. The proposed changes are approved by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting and take effect immediately upon approval.

Article XII. Ratification and Amendments to the Constitution
Section 1. Proposal Procedure
Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any member of the Senate at an official Senate meeting or SGA conference and approved for discussion by a simple majority of the Senate members present and voting.

Section 2. Ratification of the Constitution
The Constitution requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting. The Constitution approved by the Senate is voted on by the student body in a duly-authorized referendum. The Constitution is effective immediately upon ratification by a majority of the students voting in the duly-authorized referendum.

Section 3. Amendments to the Constitution
Amendments to the Constitution require a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting. The amendments approved by the Senate are voted on by the student body in a duly-authorized referendum. Approved amendments shall become part of the Constitution when ratified by a majority of the students voting in the duly-authorized referendum. The amendments are effective immediately upon ratification.

Section 4. Editorial Changes
Editorial changes such as grammar, formatting, and non-substantive re-wording may be proposed by any member of the Senate at an official Senate meeting or SGA conference and are approved and ratified by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senate members present and voting.

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RATIONALE FOR REVISIONS: We, the elected members of the 2009-2010 Student Government Association, embarked upon this revisions process to update the existing framework to ensure that the constitution of this body fully reflected the actual and current functions of the body. In many cases articles from the previous bylaws have been made more permanent and binding by placing them within the Constitution.