



# Student Constitution of the University of North Texas

## Preamble

*The Student Government Association at the University of North Texas is the official governing body for all undergraduate students. We, the Students of the University of North Texas, in order to promote the interests and opinions of the Student Body, to undertake and promote programs and projects which are of benefit to the Student Body, to serve as the official voice of the Student Body on matters of Student welfare, campus policy, and the implementation of this policy, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution of the Students, by the Students, and for the Students as the binding Constitution of the Student Body and the Student Government Association.*

## Article I: Name and Purpose

### Section 1: Name

- A) The organization of the Student Body as a whole at the University of North Texas shall be known as the Student Government Association.
- B) The Student Government Association may also be known as the “SGA”.

### Section 2: Purposes

- A) The Student Government Association shall serve as the central and all-encompassing student organization on campus.
- B) The Student Government Association shall create, promote, and support programs of benefit to all students.
- C) The Student Government Association shall provide a legislative body that is representative of the Student Body.
- D) The Student Government Association shall establish and provide communication within the Student Body and with administrators, faculty, and student bodies of other institutions.
- E) Above all, the Student Government Association shall ensure that the voice of the Students Body is always heard at the University of North Texas.

## Article II: Composition of the Association

- A) Membership in this organization is limited to any student service fee paying student who is currently enrolled at the University of North Texas.
- B) Membership is open to all students without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age,

political affiliation, disability, marital status, ancestry, genetic information, citizenship, or veteran status.

- C) The SGA will consist of the voting Student Body, a Legislative Branch, an Executive Branch, a Judicial Branch, and the Election Board.
- D) No member currently serving in a branch of the SGA shall hold concurrent active membership in any other branch of the SGA, to include the Election Board.
- E) Positions may be created for any purpose which aren't expressly provided for in this Constitution by appropriate active members of the SGA.
  - a. These positions must fall within the branch of the active member creating the position.
  - b. No active member may create a position in a branch of which that person is not a member.
- F) The Executive Branch shall be tasked with maintaining a running and accurate list of active positions within the SGA and their identification with the enumerated branches of the SGA.
  - a. This list will be readily available on the SGA website.
- G) Officers of the SGA shall be defined as any active member who is paid.
  - a. To be eligible to serve as an officer of this organization, an active student member shall possess (at the time of election and during their term of office) at least the minimum requirements regarding enrollment, GPA, and disciplinary standing as stated in UNT Policy 07.019 (Student Organization Policy).
  - b. An active student member who fails to meet any one of the requirements is automatically ineligible to serve as an officer until all criteria are met.
- H) Active membership of the SGA shall be defined as any undergraduate student holding a position in the SGA, including committee appointments and internships in the SGA.

## **Article III: Legislative Branch**

### ***Section 1: Authority***

- A) The legislative powers of the SGA shall be vested in the Student Senate.

### ***Section 2: Composition of the Legislative Branch***

- A) The Legislative Branch will consist of the Student Senate.
- B) Each school, college, or academy of the University shall be apportioned at least two Student Senate seats.
  - a. Five seats will be apportioned at-large, which will represent the entire undergraduate Student Body.

- b. Schools, colleges, and academies that contain more than 11% of the undergraduate student population (as reported by Data Analytics and Institutional Research) will be apportioned an additional two seats.
- C) Non-voting delegations to the Student Senate with otherwise full procedural rights shall be accepted from the SGA Interns and one delegate from the following organizations: Eagle's Nest, residence hall associations, the Graduate Student Council, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, the office of the SGA President, and the office of the University of North Texas President, the SGA Advisor, and the Election Board.

### ***Section 3: Appointments***

- A) In the event that a Student Senator is unable to serve any portion of the term, or in the event that a vacancy arises in the Student Senate, a student may petition to fill the vacancy.
  - a. Schools, colleges, or academies which are classified as underrepresented may be represented by a student not in its constituency.
    - i. Schools, colleges, or academies are considered underrepresented if they have less than half of their seats filled at any given time.
- B) All appointments are subject to a confirmation by a simple two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Student Senate and any rules established in the SGA Bylaws with regards to appointments.

### ***Section 4: Election and Terms of Student Senators***

- A) Student Senators will be elected according to the rules and eligibility requirements established by the Student Government Association Bylaws.
- B) Student Senators must be enrolled in the constituency in which they have filed for election.
- C) Student Senate elections will be held in the spring semester in accordance with the Student Government Association Bylaws.
- D) The results of any Student Senate election will take effect in the immediately following long semester. Student Senators shall serve a term of one summer semester and two long semesters.

### ***Section 5: Meetings***

- A) The Student Senate will meet at least bi-weekly during each long semester.
- B) The Student Senate shall convene on Wednesday evenings.
  - a. The Student Senate may convene specially called meetings, to be referred to as special sessions, outside of Wednesday evenings with a simple two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Student Senate.

- C) The time of the meetings must be consistent within each semester. Should the times set for the meetings be changed for any reason, it requires such change to be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) simple majority vote of the Student Senate.
- D) Fifty percent plus one (50%+1) of the seated Student Senators shall constitute quorum.
- E) Proceedings shall be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order as may be modified in the Student Government Association Bylaws.
- F) All Student Senate meetings are subject to Texas Open Meetings Laws.

### ***Section 6: Student Senate Committees***

- A) The Student Senate Standing Committees shall be enumerated in the SGA Bylaws.

### ***Section 7: Officers of the Senate***

- A) The Officers of the Senate shall be the Speaker Pro Tempore, Sergeant at Arms, Senate Secretary, and any other positions detailed in the SGA Bylaws.
- B) The Officers of the Senate shall be empowered to call a special session of the Student Senate by a verifiable majority vote of the Officers, the record of which shall be disseminated to the Senate upon the vote's passage by the officers.
  - a. Votes shall be considered verifiable if there is a written record of the vote and how Officers have voted.

### ***Section 8: Duties and Powers of the Student Senate***

- A) The Student Senate shall have the power to consider legislation presented to it in accordance with the Student Government Association Bylaws.
- B) The Student Senate shall have the power to approve, modify, or deny all expenditures of the SGA as follows:
  - a. Single-item expenditures over four hundred dollars (\$400).
  - b. Multiple expenditures for a single event totaling over eight hundred dollars (\$800).
- C) The Student Senate shall have the power to override a Presidential veto by an absolute two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.
- D) The Student Senate shall have the power and duty to elect Senate Officers from their own number.
- E) The Student Senate shall have the power to confirm or deny non-elected appointees of the Judicial Branch, Election Board, and paid appointees of the Executive Branch by a simple two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.
- F) The Student Senate shall have the power to remove or fire non-elected members of the Executive Branch, the Election Board, and the Judicial Branch by an absolute two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

- G) The Student Senate shall have the duty to carry out duties assigned to it by the Student Government Bylaws.
- H) The Student Senate shall have the power to amend the Student Government Association Bylaws by a simple two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.
- I) The Student Senate shall have the power and duty to perform any other actions as may be deemed necessary and proper but are not explicitly provided for in this document or the Student Government Association Bylaws.
- J) Student Senators shall be required, as a part of their duties, to sit on a Senate Standing Committee and at least one committee independent from the Senate.
- K) The Student Senate shall have the power to govern its own operation when not directed by the Student Constitution or SGA Bylaws.

### ***Section 9: Summer Senate***

- A) The Summer Senate shall consist of at least ten (10) Student Senators who have been elected by the Student Body to serve a regular Senate term, which includes the Spring semester immediately preceding or the Fall Semester immediately following the Summer Term in question.
- B) These Student Senators shall be selected by the Senate on a volunteer basis and must be confirmed by a simple two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Student Senate before the end of the last Senate meeting of the spring semester.
- C) The Summer Senate shall exercise all duties and powers of the Student Senate to exclude the impeachment and removal of the Student Body President.
- D) The Summer Senate must meet at least once during both the Summer I and Summer II semesters.

### ***Section 10: Removal of Student Senators***

- A) Student Senators may be recalled and removed from the Student Senate by a majority vote of the Judicial Branch after such a vote is called by either (1) a simple majority vote of the Senate or (2) a verifiable petition of five percent of the members of their constituency.
- B) Student Senators may also be removed from the Student Senate by the Speaker of the Senate on the grounds of neglect of office, absence from Student Senate sessions, moral turpitude, dereliction of duty, or gross malfeasance of Office. The removal may be appealed to the Judicial Branch.
- C) The internal discipline and removal of Student Senators is deferred to the Senate Code of Conduct.

## **Article IV: The Executive Branch**

### ***Section 1: Executive Powers***

- A) The Executive Power of the Student Government Association is vested in the Student Body President and Executive Branch.

### ***Section 2: Composition of the Executive Branch***

- A) The Executive Branch shall consist of the Student Body President, the Vice President and any appointed or hired members of the Student Government Association paid and volunteer staff.

### ***Section 3: Election of Executives***

- A) The President and Vice President shall be popularly elected as a team by a majority of all voting students during the Spring semester, according to the rules established in the Student Government Association Bylaws.
- B) Any candidates for President or Vice President must meet eligibility requirements as defined by this constitution.
- C) The President and Vice President shall officially assume office on June 1<sup>st</sup> following their election and shall vacate their offices the following May 31<sup>st</sup>.

### ***Section 4: Eligibility for Executive Office***

- A) The Student Body President must have attained junior status by the time of the assumption of office.
- B) An individual may only serve one term as Student Body President.
- C) An individual may only serve one term as Student Body Vice-President.
  - a. An individual may not serve as Vice-President after having served as President.

### ***Section 5: Duties and Powers of the President***

- A) The President shall serve as Chief Executive of the SGA.
- B) The President shall be empowered to represent the Student Body to the administration, faculty, and parties outside the University.
- C) The President shall be empowered to call special sessions of the Student Senate.
- D) The President shall be empowered to appoint members of the Student Body to appropriate University Committees and Boards.
- E) The President shall be charged to maintain the physical offices of the Association.
- F) The President shall be empowered to sponsor and submit legislation to the Student Senate.
- G) The President shall be empowered to hire or appoint other members of the Executive Branch.

- H) The President shall be empowered to appoint Supreme Court Justices and the Advocate General.
- I) The President shall be empowered to veto any legislation of the Student Senate within 14 days of its passage.
- J) The President shall be empowered to set policy consistent with this Constitution and the SGA Bylaws in the absence of direction from the Student Senate.
- K) The President shall have the responsibility to perform other duties as directed by the Student Senate or as required to achieve the purposes of this Constitution.

### ***Section 6: Duties and Powers of the Vice President***

- A) The Student Body Vice President will have the duty to serve as President in the event that the Student Body President is unable to serve and to perform other duties as assigned by the Student Body President.
- B) The Vice President will serve as the Speaker of the Senate.

### ***Section 7: Removal of Elected Executives***

- A) The Student Body President and/or Vice President may be removed from office in a two-step process. The first step will consist of either: (1) a majority vote of all seated Senators, or (2) a verifiable petition of five percent (5%) of the Student Body. If this step is successful, the second step, an absolute two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate will be necessary to remove the President and/or Vice President from office.
- B) The process for removal of elected executives will be outlined in the SGA Bylaws.
- C) A removal election shall not coincide with a regular Student Election.

### ***Section 8: Executive Succession***

- A) In the event that the Student Body President is unable to serve, the Vice President shall assume that office.
- B) In the event that the Vice President is unable to serve, the President shall nominate a successor to the Student Senate. This successor must be confirmed by an absolute two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Student Senate.
- C) In the event that the President and Vice President are simultaneously rendered unable to serve, the Speaker Pro Tempore shall immediately become interim President until a new President is elected.
  - a. The Election Board shall be charged to conduct a general student election to elect a new President and Vice President with a timeline set forth by the Student Senate.
    - i. In the case that the Election Board consists of less than 5 individuals, the Student Senate shall be required to nominate all current members of the Election Board and any undergraduate

students to fill the remainder to an Emergency Election Board, which will then conduct the above student election.

- ii. The remainder of Emergency Election Board members may be nominated and confirmed of the whole undergraduate Student Body by the Senate.
  - iii. No member of the Emergency Election Board may run in the election which they conduct.
  - iv. In the case that there is not an Election Board Commissioner, the Emergency Election Board (if it exists) shall elect an Emergency Election Board Commissioner from their own number.
- b. The interim President retains membership in, and shall chair, the Student Senate and is eligible to be elected Student Body President.

## **Article V: The Judicial Branch**

### ***Section 1: Composition of the Judiciary***

- A) The Judicial Branch shall consist of the seven-seat Supreme Court and the Office of the Advocate General.
- B) Members of the Judiciary shall not hold concurrent membership in any other branch, agency, or committee administered or chaired by an active member of the SGA.

### ***Section 2: The Supreme Court***

- C) The Supreme Court shall consist of seven Justices appointed from the Student Body by the Student Body President who have attained junior status and are in good standing with the University.
- D) The Supreme Court will elect from their own number a Chief Justice to preside over all judicial proceedings and administer the business of the Supreme Court.
- E) Supreme Court Justices shall not perform work or actions that are not strictly within the parameters of their duties as defined in this article.
- F) Supreme Court Justices shall be appointed to serve terms coinciding with the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters of one academic year.
- G) The Supreme Court shall have binding original jurisdiction over disputes arising over this Constitution, the SGA Bylaws and its component documents, actions of the Legislative Branch, and actions of the Executive Branch.
- H) The Supreme Court shall have binding appellate jurisdiction over disputes arising over SGA elections.
- I) Cases may be brought before the court for a binding ruling in which only one party is involved. In such cases, the Supreme Court should publish the case on official SGA media outlets and allow a party consisting of undergraduate students



to claim themselves as subject to the case as a contested party for a period between three to five business days.

- J) The Supreme Court shall have non-binding jurisdiction over disputes brought before it by undergraduate students or student organizations.
- K) The Supreme Court shall meet regularly at least once per month or as needed, unless it has no business to consider.
- L) All documents associated with any rulings considered and ruled on by the Supreme Court, to include briefs, rulings, and meeting minutes, must be permanently retained as official records in the SGA office and must be made available upon request.
- M) The procedures of Supreme Court hearings, document filings, and any other actions pertaining to the Supreme Court may be further defined in the SGA bylaws.
  - a. In the absence of direction in the SGA bylaws, the Supreme Court shall manage a publicly-accessible document containing these provisions.

### ***Section 3: The Office of the Advocate General***

- A) The Advocate General shall be appointed by the Student Body President to serve a term coinciding with the Fall, Spring, and Summer Semesters of one academic year.
- B) The Advocate General will advise the SGA in legal matters and shall only represent the SGA in judicial proceedings before the Supreme Court.
- C) The Advocate General must be of at least junior status and in good standing with the University.
- D) The Advocate General may select volunteer staff to assist in the execution of the Advocate General's duties.
  - a. The Advocate General reserves the right to direct and remove volunteer staff at will within the requirements of SGA governing documents.

## **Article VI: The Election Board**

### ***Section 1: Name and Independence***

- A) The entity that oversees and conducts all SGA elections shall be known as the Election Board.
- B) The Election Board is a body independent from the three branches of the SGA.

### ***Section 2: Rules on the Election Board***

- A) Members of the Election Board shall be appointed by the Election Commissioner to serve a term coinciding with the Fall, Spring, and Summer Semesters of one academic year.

- B) The Election Board shall consist of a paid Election Commissioner, who shall administer the business of the Election Board, and four unpaid Election Board members.
- C) The Election Board shall govern SGA Elections, educate interested candidates for office and referendum parties in Election policies, and perform all other duties necessary and legal to execute their duties.
- D) The Election Board shall have the power to rule on matters pertaining to elections, including but not limited to: interpretations and violations of the Election Code, questions of candidate eligibility, candidate and Referendum Party complaints and concerns, questions of referendum eligibility, filing dates and deadlines, and the certification of any election results.
- E) The Election Board shall have binding original jurisdiction over disputes that arise over SGA elections.
- F) Elections of the SGA, and the Election Board, shall be governed by the Election Code.
  - a. The Election Code may be amended by a simple majority vote of the Election Board, with a subsequent simple majority approval of the Senate.
  - b. The Election Code may be unilaterally amended by an absolute two-thirds majority (2/3) of the Senate.
- G) Allegations of violations of the Election Code by the Election Board shall be the sole jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

## **Article VII: Fiscal Matters**

### ***Section 1: Student Service Fees***

- A) The Student Government Association shall annually apply for the receipt of Student Services Fees from the University of North Texas Student Service Fees Committee.
- B) The Association shall function as an independent Student Service Fees unit within the University of North Texas and shall follow all fiscal procedures pertaining to such status.

### ***Section 2: Funding Programs***

- A) The Eagle's Nest Fund shall be governed by the Student Government Association Bylaws and Eagle's Nest Fund policy.
- B) The B. Craig Raupe Travel Grant Fund shall be governed by the Student Government Association Bylaws and the B. Craig Raupe Travel Grant Fund policy.

## **Article VIII: Amendments to this Constitution**

### ***Section 1: Proposal of Amendments***

- A) Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by a absolute two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Student Senate or by a verifiable petition of one thousand two hundred and fifty (1250) members of the Student Body.
- B) Any action calling for amendment of this Constitution must specify whether the issue shall be considered in the immediately following general election or in a special election call for that purpose.
- C) Meeting the requirements for the proposal of amendments shall be considered sufficient grounds and merit for the calling of such an election.
- D) Constitutional Amendments must be in the form of Striking Out, Inserting, or Striking Out and Inserting. This Constitution shall not be stricken in its entirety without the concurrent proposal of a legitimate Insertion.
- E) Changes may be made to grammar and syntax problems in this document with notification to all active members of the SGA, ending the absolute two-thirds (2/3) approval of the Senate. Such changes will not alter the meaning of this document.

### ***Section 2: Passage of Amendments***

- A) Amendments must be passed by a majority of the members of the Student Body voting in an election in which Amendments are to be considered.

## **Article IX: Jurisdiction of this Constitution**

### ***Section 1: Legality***

- A) This document is recognized as the official and binding Constitution of the Student Government Association and the undergraduate Student Body of the University of North Texas.
- B) This Constitution shall be subject to the maintenance of the utmost good faith to the Students of the University of North Texas.
- C) This organization shall comply with all University policies (including the Code of Student Conduct) and procedures, as well as local, state, and federal laws.
- D) As defined in state law (Texas Education Code 37.151-157) and University policy, this organization will not engage in hazing, participate in hazing, or commit any act that causes or is likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to any fellow student or person attending the institution.
- E) The SGA Advisor and the SGA Election Board Advisor, as two separate individuals, are determined by the University of North Texas.

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