

Goshen College Student Senate Constitution

(March 2015)

Preamble

The Goshen College Student Senate is hereby recognized by Goshen College Student Association, faculty, staff and administration as the official body for protecting student rights and advocating for their interests, increasing the quality of students' educational and academic experience, upholding the core values of the College in all areas of student life, facilitating communication between students and administration, recognizing and funding student organizations, and representing the student body in College board meetings and in all official College business.

Article I : Membership

Section 1. All full and part time students who are currently enrolled at Goshen College shall be members of the Goshen College Student Association, and are eligible to vote in all elections.

Section 2. All executive and legislative authority of the Goshen College Student Association shall be vested in a Student Senate. The Student Association shall elect a President, Vice-President, Vice-President of Marketing, Secretary, Treasurer and an adequate number of Representatives-at-large. The Senate has the right to define the qualifications for becoming a representative in order to make sure the Student Association is being represented fairly and equally. The President shall nominate, subject to the approval of the Senate, non-voting Officers, and non-voting Advisors which the Senate shall deem necessary.

Section 3. The Goshen College Student Association is financed by an appropriation from the Student Life budget. The Dean of Students has the authority to determine how much money will be allocated to the Goshen College Student Association. The Student Association's budget can never be less than fifteen percent of Student Life's annual budget for student organizations and events.

Section 4. All members of the Goshen College Student Association, faculty and staff have the right to attend all regular and special Senate meetings unless, by majority vote, the Senate shall go into executive session.

Section 5. All acts, resolutions, and allocations passed by the Senate must be approved by a majority vote unless otherwise provided for in this Constitution. All votes must be cast in person or by an appointed proxy.

Section 6. In order to become a member of Senate, a student must not be on disciplinary or academic probation at the time of election. Qualifications may be waived by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

Article II : Organizational Structure

Section 1. The Executive Committee consists of the following positions:

- A. President
- B. Vice-President
- C. Secretary
- D. Treasurer
- E. Vice-President of Marketing

Section 2. The President of the Goshen College Student Association shall:

- A. Call, preside, and prepare the agenda for all meetings;
- B. Facilitate communication between the Board of Directors, faculty and staff of Goshen College;
- C. Enforce, along with the Senate, this Constitution and all regulations passed under its authority.
- D. Not have a voting position.
- E. Have the authority to veto. (Veto can be overruled by two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Senate)

Section 3. The Vice-President of the Goshen College Student Association shall perform the duties of the President upon absence or request of the President. At other times, he/she shall serve in the Senate as a representative-at-large.

Section 4. The Secretary of the Goshen College Student Association shall take accurate minutes of each meeting, and be responsible for all correspondence and clerical work; including revising and posting meeting minutes. At other times, he/she shall serve in the Senate as a representative-at-large.

Section 5. The Treasurer of the Goshen College Student Association shall facilitate, organize and oversee all allocations of the Student Association's funds. The Treasurer is also responsible for overseeing the club funding allocation proposal at the beginning of each school year, and putting it up for vote. At other times, he/she shall serve in the Senate as a representative-at-large.

Section 6. The Vice-President of Marketing of the Goshen College Student Association shall be responsible for all marketing and publicity of Student Senate and related events. The Vice President of Marketing shall also be responsible for any work related to public relations.

Section 7. The At-large Representatives of the Goshen College Student Association shall:

- A. Approve the club funding allocation proposal;
- B. Make recommendations to the faculty and administration;
- C. Aid in the advancement of Senate initiatives;
- D. Act as liaisons between Senate and institutional committees.

Section 8. The Faculty and Staff representatives of Goshen College are non-voting members and shall provide guidance and insight.

Article III : Elections

Section 1. Elections for the Executive Committee and Representatives-at-large shall run in accordance with the Election Code. The Senate Cabinet shall supervise the election, tabulation, and creation of ballots. The Election Code shall be made available on the Goshen College Student Senate website.

Article IV : Meetings

Section 1. The Senate shall meet on a regular basis agreed upon by all elected officials. The President and the Vice-President have the right to call special meetings.

Article V : Procedure

Section 1. All Senate meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rule of Order unless another format is outlined in the Constitution or the Bylaws. It is the responsibility of the President to enforce the most recent version of Robert's Rule of Order. Alternative rulers of order can be adopted by the Senate on a year to year basis. A two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Senate is needed to replace Robert's Rule of Order with an alternative structure.

Article VII : Amendments

Section 1. Amendments that change the substantive content of this Constitution shall be initiated by at least a two-thirds vote of the Senate or by a petition submitted by any member of the Goshen College Student Association. Each petition for such an amendment shall contain the full text of the proposed amendment and shall be signed by one hundred members of the Goshen College Student Association. Petitions for amendments shall be filed with the Senate.

Section 2. The Senate shall post proposed amendments at least three days before the Goshen College Student Association is to vote on the proposal.

Section 3. The Senate shall make provisions for a special election for any duly initiated constitutional amendment; provided that such an election shall be held no later than three weeks following the initiation of the amendment; provided further that no such election shall be held during the final two weeks of a term. An amendment shall become effective as a part of this Constitution only if approved by a majority of the votes cast on the amendment.

Section 4. A new Constitution to replace this Constitution shall be initiated and adopted in the same manner that amendments to this Constitution are to be initiated and adopted.

Goshen College Student Senate

Bylaws

Section I: Membership

- A. The Senate shall consist of a cabinet, representatives and an advisor.

Cabinet

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Vice-President of Marketing

Representatives

Representatives-at-large

-Cabinet will decide the appropriate number of positions (5 or 6 recommended).

Advisor

Dean of Students

- A. If, for any reason, the office of a Representative-at-large becomes vacant, the Senate shall make provisions for a special election in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Constitution, these Bylaws, and the election code.
- B. Senate must strive to effectively represent the diversity of the student body through membership. Before every election, Senate must reevaluate how diversity is represented within Senate. See Section III.
- C. If at any point a Senate Member is on academic or disciplinary probation, he/she will be asked to resign from office. However, a vote may be taken by Senate, in which a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote would overrule this judgment.
- D. Length of membership:
- a. Senate President must serve for both academic semesters.
 - b. Cabinet members and At-Large Representatives must serve both semesters if enrolled and taking classes on campus.
 - i. If planning to only serve one (1) semester candidate are encouraged to co-run with running mate.

Section II: Responsibilities

Senate Responsibilities

- A. Attendance
- a. All senate members are expected to attend all meetings.
 - b. Every Senate member has the right be excused from two (2) meetings every semester.
 - c. In order to be properly excused from a meeting, a Senate member must submit a written letter to the Secretary 24 hours before a meeting explaining why they will not be able to attend the Senate

- meeting.
- d. The Senate Secretary may and should present Articles of Impeachment against any cabinet member/senator who fails to meet the attendance requirements.
- B. Communication with Constituents
 - a. Senate must provide a space for clear communication of Goshen College Board meetings outcomes to student body after each biannual board meeting.
- C. Determining Salaries
 - a. Salaries for Senate members may change year to year according to budget.
 - b. Dean of Students must provide input to avoid conflict of interest.
 - c. The combined salaries of Cabinet members can never be greater than fifteen percent (15%) of the SGA budget.
- D. Club Funding. See Section V
- E. Senate Initiatives
 - a. Senate is responsible for addressing questions, comments, concerns of the student body and identify positive and effective strategies for moving forward.
 - b. Contribute to the betterment of the collegiate experience for all students.
 - c. If an initiative is under debate (whether to continue or not) requires a majority vote to pass.
- F. Overseeing Club Activities
 - a. Senate will be responsible for organizing two club days, one at the beginning of each semester.
 - b. All official clubs must be represented at club day if they desire funding for the year.
 - i. Clubs must be notified of this in advance.
 - c. Each Senate member will be assigned with the task of checking-in with a designated number of clubs during each semester.

Section III: Elections

- A. All elections will be ran in accordance with the Election Code.
- B. The Election code can be suspended by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Senate
- C. Diversity of voices on Senate shall be evaluated before each election and steps should be taken by the current Senate members to strive for fair representation of the student body.
 - i. For example, if diversity is an issue as determined by the (bi)annual evaluation, current Senate members should personally invite 3-5 friends of different backgrounds, cultures, ethnic groups etc. to put their name on the ballot.

Section IV: Allocating Student Senate Funds

- A. General SGA Transactions
 - a. Any expenditure made by Student Senate must first be approved by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Senate.
 - b. The Treasurer will be responsible for recording any expenditures.
- B. Primary Club Allocation
 - a. At the beginning of every school year, all club applicants have the right to apply for up to \$500 for their annual budget.
 - b. The primary allocation of funds for clubs should not be used for large campus events, trips, or

- conventions.
- c. The Treasurer must create a committee in order to oversee the funding of clubs. This committee is responsible for reviewing all funding requests, and then presenting a plan for how much funding each club should receive.
- d. In order for the the Treasurer's committees plan to pass, Senate must approve the proposal with a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote.
- C. Additional Club Funding Requests
 - a. Additional club funding requests should be used by clubs in order to finance club trips, large campus events, conventions, or expand their annual budget.
 - b. Clubs can apply for a maximum of \$1000 per funding request.

Section V: Transition Policy

- A. Senate members will maintain a folder on the Goshen College network with the following files in order to make yearly transitions more efficient.
 - a. Club Allocation Transactions
 - b. SGA Budget Transactions
 - c. Minutes Template
 - d. Additional Funding Request Form Templates
 - e. Minutes from the previous year
 - f. A document containing login information for the Student Senate website
 - g. A document containing login information for all Student Senate social media accounts

Section VI: Amendments

- A. All amendments to the Bylaws must be approved by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Senate.

Section VII: Implementation and Suspension

- A. The Bylaws must be implemented by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Senate and are effective immediately upon implementation unless otherwise specified. The Bylaws may be suspended at any time by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Senate.

Section VIII: Impeachment and Removal

Impeachment

In order to impeach any member of the Student Senate, the body must be presented with at least one (1) charge accompanied by at least one (1) specification of misconduct or violation or negligence of duties outlined in the Bylaws. A member of the Student Senate can also be impeached.

Impeachment must be initiated in one the following manners:

- A. External: The removal of Cabinet members or Representatives-at-large initiated by petition need only a majority vote of the Senate.
- B. Petitions must include the charge(s) and specification(s) and, upon verification of signatures by the Senate Secretary (or Vice-President if the Secretary is in question), shall constitute an automatic impeachment.
- C. The Secretary (or Vice-President) will have forty-eight (48) hours to verify the petition.
- D. In this sequence, the President (or Vice-President if the President is in question) shall, upon majority vote of the Senate, appoint a regularly voting senator to act as prosecutor.
 - a. Cabinet Member: a petition must be signed by a majority of the members of the Student Association.
 - b. Representative-at-large: a petition must be signed by one-fourth ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the members of the Student Association.
 - c. Internal: The removal of officers/senators/advisor initiated by a member of Senate shall require a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Senate.

Any regular voting member(s) may present Articles of Impeachment against any cabinet member/representative. The Articles of Impeachment must consist of the charge(s) and specification(s) against the cabinet member/representative. A majority vote of the regular voting membership is required for the Senate to adopt the Articles of Impeachment. Any author of the Articles may act as prosecutor.

The Senate Secretary may and should present Articles of Impeachment against any cabinet member/senator who fails to meet the attendance or notes requirements; the Secretary shall act as prosecutor. The Vice-President should present the Articles of Impeachment if the Secretary is in violation and the Vice-President shall then act as prosecutor.

The current Dean of Students and the President (or Vice-President if the President is in question) of Senate should present Articles of Impeachment against any cabinet member or representative if during their Senate term they are put on academic or disciplinary probation. The cabinet member or representative that is in question may lose their right to the formal impeachment process if all voting members of the Senate sign a petition asking for the removal of said cabinet member or representative.

The Articles of Impeachment should be submitted in writing no later than forty-eight (48) hours before a regularly scheduled meeting to the Secretary (or Vice-President if the Presidential Assistant is in question). The officer/senator in question should be notified by the Presidential Assistant (or Vice- President) no later than twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting.

Removal

- A. Upon adoption of Articles of Impeachment, the prosecutor must meet with the Senate President (or Vice-President, if the impeached is the President) within twenty-four (24) hours of a successful impeachment to decide a time at which to conduct the trial. The trial must be held no sooner than one (1) week after the successful impeachment vote.
- B. The trial will be conducted in executive session. If the impeached is the President, then the Vice-President will preside over the trial. The accused Senator may retain as counsel one member of the Goshen College community. The prosecutor and the impeached may present witnesses or other evidence. The Senate, however, will not have subpoena power over members of the Student Association or anyone else. Hearsay testimony may be used as evidence.

The trial will proceed in the following order:

- a. Prosecutor's opening statement
 - b. Impeached Officer/Senator's opening statement Prosecutor's evidence
 - c. Impeached Officer/Senator's evidence Impeached Officer/Senator's closing statement Prosecutor's closing statement
 - d. Motion by prosecutor to remove
 - e. Discussion and vote
- C. During the trial, the senators are to act as jurors. They may ask questions of the presiding officer (the President or Vice-President), but they may not ask questions of the prosecutor, the accused senator, or the witnesses, except in writing, at the discretion of the presiding officer. Both the prosecutor and the impeached officer/senator may cross-examine the other's witnesses. The prosecutor and the accused must leave the meeting while the discussion of the motion takes place, but must be given the opportunity to vote on the removal motion if s/he is a regular voting member. The motion to remove requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority, secret ballot vote of the Senate unless previously stated in this section. Upon a successful removal vote, the impeached officer/senator is immediately removed from office, with all rights and privileges revoked. The removed officer/senator is barred from holding any future Senate office. Regardless of the outcome, the Senate shall adopt a statement to the Student Association before the meeting expires.
- D. The removal procedure may be stopped at any time before the removal vote by a two-thirds(2/3) vote of the Senate. In such case, the accused Senator is not subject to retrial for the same offense.

Appealing Appointments

- A. The process for an individual to appeal an appointment made by the Student Senate should go as follows:
- a. Individual must file a written challenge with the Vice-President of the Student Senate within fourteen (14) days of the appointment, stating the reason for the appeal, and any other pertinent information.
 - b. The Vice-President shall bring that written statement to the Executive Committee who will then deem the challenge acceptable or otherwise using the following criteria:
 - i. Constitutionality of the appointment: according to the Student Senate Constitution or Student Senate Bylaws.
 - ii. Breach in procedure: according to the Student Senate Constitution or Student Senate Bylaws.
- B. If the Executive Committee deems the appeal acceptable it will then be placed on the following Senate meeting's agenda, under the Executive report. The individual that filed the appeal must be in attendance at the Senate meeting in order for the appeal to be brought in front of the Senate body.
- C. An appeal can be made by any current Goshen College student.

Section IX: Executive Session

- A. Senate has the power to enter executive session.
- B. Only the Cabinet members, Representatives-at-large, and the Advisor outlined in Section I of the Bylaws will be allowed to remain in a meeting once it has entered into executive session.
- C. A Senator is considered in violation of executive session if he or she repeats outside of executive session any matters discussed during the session. Any Senator who is accused of said violation is subject to removal as

outlined in Section IV of the Bylaws.

- D. Each time the Senate enters executive session its members may, before exiting, prepare a statement reflecting the nature of the business conducted and/or opinions expressed in executive session.

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(revised from 2000)