



- Student Government Association -

Constitution of the Student Government Association

Preamble

We, the students of the University of West Alabama, in order to preserve and defend the rights and privileges of student self-governance, to assure a student voice and involvement in University decisions, to foster a spirit of unity among students, to strive toward a better understanding between administration, faculty, staff, and students, to serve the common interest of all students, to train ourselves in democratic government, and to promote citizenship on campus, do hereby establish this Constitution of the Student Government Association for the students of The University of West Alabama.

Article I Name of Organization

The name of this organization shall be called the Student Government Association of The University of West Alabama and may be abbreviated as SGA.

Article II Purpose

Section 1: To encourage student activity on the campus of The University of West Alabama.

Section 2: To uphold the Constitution of the SGA.

Section 3: To work with the University administration in all matters affecting the student body.

Section 4: To establish reasonable standards for recognition of all organizations on campus.

Section 5: To encourage and promote a closer relationship between students, faculty, and staff.

Section 6: To stimulate and develop good citizenship and democracy among students.

Section 7: To cultivate and maintain leadership among the students.

Article III Membership

Section 1: The membership of this organization shall consist of all currently enrolled students of The University of West Alabama.

Section 2: Qualified members may become senators, executive officers, or any other appointed office holder.

Section 3: Members of this organization shall be entitled to vote in SGA elections.

Section 4: No student may hold more than one office in the SGA at the same time.

Article IV Legislative Branch

Section 1: Legislative power. All Legislative powers of the SGA shall be vested in the Student Senate.

Section 2: Composition. The Senate shall consist of two senators-at-large, two senators from each class, one senator from each college, one senator from the School of Graduate Studies, and one senator from RHA.

Section 3: Eligibility. Eligibility requirements of all candidates intending to run for a position in the Senate must be met prior to filling a statement of candidacy.

A. Senator Qualifications

- a. Candidate for a senator position must be a full-time student.
- b. They must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
 - i. If he or she is elected and does not maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5, he or she will become ineligible, and must tender a resignation.
- c. Candidates for class senator positions must have accrued at least the number of hours required by the University for the candidate to obtain the particular class status. (0-29 Freshman, 30-59 Sophomore, 60-89 Junior, 90+ Senior)
- d. Candidates for senators of colleges (excluding the Division of Nursing and the School of Graduate Studies) as well as senators-at-large must be within 12 semester hours of Junior status.

B. House of Representatives

- a. The House of Representatives shall consist of a representative of each Student Organization recognized by the SGA
- b. The House shall meet once a month along with the Student Senate as set by the SGA President.
- c. The House is granted no voting privileges, but are allowed to market their upcoming events during announcements of the SGA Meeting.

Section 4: Vacancies in the Senate. Vacancies in the Senate shall be elected using the following procedure:

- A. A new candidate for the senate position will be presented to the legislators.
- B. The legislative branch will vote on the candidate.
 - a. Majority rules.

Section 5: Duties of Legislature.

A. Senators.

- a. Senators shall serve in a responsible manner.
- b. Senators shall serve on appointed committees throughout the year.
- c. Upon taking office, Senators must contact his or her constituency and provide at least the following: fully name, address, phones number, and email address.
 - i. Senators-at-large senators will contact different student organizations.
- d. Senators are required to work a minimum of ten (10) hours per semester in some capacity in service to SGA.
 - i. The purpose of the SGA office is to provide the student body access to elected representatives during regular school hours.
 - ii. The SGA office will be open on weekdays according to the senator office hour schedule of the semester.

B. Representatives.

- a. Representatives shall be responsible to attend SGA meetings and to report to their respective organizations the actions take at that meeting.

Section 6: Absence policy in the Senate.

- A. A senator will automatically be dismissed from the legislature when he or she is absent without excuse more than three times during his or her term.
- B. If a senator is absent without excuse more than twice in one semester, he or she is automatically on probation for the rest of that semester and is ineligible to receive the stipend for that semester.

C. Excused absences must be cleared with the Secretary or the President prior to the meeting missed.

D. A represented body will automatically lose its vote for one semester when its representative acquires more than two unexcused absences during that semester.

a. An organization that loses its vote in the legislature is banned from receiving funds for the remainder of that semester and the next semester.

Section 7: Presentation and passage of legislation. The Senate shall:

A. Develop and pass legislation on behalf of students of The University of West Alabama students.

B. Approve the funding recommendations for student activities and programs as proposed by the Financial Committee within the executive branch of the SGA.

C. Pass an SGA budget for the fiscal year.

D. Confirm or reject Executive Council appointments, including Executive Cabinet officials and Executive Council officers appointed to fill vacancies.

E. Set the day and time for meetings of the Senate, and establish and enforce an attendance policy for members of the Senate.

F. Two-thirds of the Senate's voting members shall constitute a quorum to conduct business.

G. Students who have items of business to be brought before the Senate will present them through a legislator.

a. However, a student or faculty visiting the legislature may have a period of time not to exceed five minutes to supplement the legislator's presentation if he or she deems it necessary.

Article V Executive Branch

Section 1: Executive power. All executive powers of the SGA shall be vested in the Executive Council.

Section 2: Composition. The Executive branch shall consist of six members: President, Vice President, Business Manager, Secretary, Attorney General, and STARS Coordinator.

Section 3: Eligibility.

A. Officer Qualifications.

- a. All candidates shall be currently enrolled as full-time students and shall maintain at least a GPA of a 2.50 on a 4.0 scale.
- b. A candidate for the office of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Business Manager shall be within twelve hours of junior status at time of election.
- c. A candidate for office of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Business Manager must have served at least one term as a senator on the SGA prior to taking office.
- d. A Candidate for the office of Attorney General and Public Relations Chairman does not have to serve as a Senator if he or she is of junior status at time of appointment.

Section 4: Duties of Officers.

A. The President.

- a. The President shall be a member of the Student Conduct Committee, Homecoming Committee, and ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees upon assumption of office.
- b. The President shall preside over the weekly EC meeting.
- c. The President may call special meetings of the SGA with one working day's notice.
- d. The President, assisted by the Business Manager, shall prepare the yearly budget to be submitted to and approved by the legislature.
- e. The President shall appoint the Attorney General, STARS Coordinator, and any committee appointments and their chairpersons, as he or she deems necessary.
- f. Execute the laws and regulations of the SGA.
- g. Meet with all committee chairpersons at least once a month.

B. The Vice-President.

- a. The Vice-President shall be the presiding officer over the legislature.
 - i. Other members of the executive body shall be ex-officio members of the legislature.

b. In the absence of the President, shall perform all the duties of the office of President.

i. In the event that the Vice-President assumes the office of President, a special election shall be held among the legislature to elect a Vice-President.

c. The Vice-President shall have a working knowledge of “Robert’s Rules of Order” to enable him or her to preside over the legislature effectively.

C. The Business Manager.

a. Shall distribute the student activity funds allocated to the SGA legislature according to the instructions of the legislature.

b. The Business Manager shall prepare all requisitions for purchases except emergency ones, which may be made by the advisor of SGA.

i. The advisor shall report to the SGA any emergency expenditures.

c. The Business Manager shall aid the President in preparing the annual budget statement.

d. The Business Manager shall make a report each semester after auditing the finances of the SGA or at the request of the legislator.

e. Responsible for presenting a complete record of all expenditures and funds to the legislature at the end of the year.

D. The Secretary.

a. The Secretary shall record and file the proceedings of the SGA and keep typewritten records on file in the SGA office and Office of Student Life. They will be on file within one week after the meeting date. Copies can be obtained through arrangement with the secretary.

b. The Secretary shall arrive for the SGA meeting at least one-half hour before the start of the meeting and shall be responsible for putting out names places and other items necessary for the conducting of the meeting.

E. Attorney General

a. The Attorney General shall act as advisor in mainly legal affairs.

- b. The Attorney General shall present revisions of the constitution and studies all student organizations.
- c. The Attorney General shall administer all aspects of elections.
- d. The Attorney General shall know the University SGA constitution.
- e. The Attorney General shall also be the STARS representative for the SGA.
- f. Responsible for all business pertaining to Higher Education Day.
- g. Act as the representative for the University at all STARS meetings in Montgomery.
- h. Responsible for appointing a STARS Assistant as well as STARS Board.

F. Public Relations

- a. Responsible for all advertising done by the SGA
- b. Will assist the Attorney General with flyers, banners, and t-shirts for Higher Ed Day.
- c. Will be responsible for maintain the SGA Social Media Pages.

Article VI Judicial Committee

Section 1: Judicial Power.

- A. The Judicial Committee shall have power to hear and pass judgment on all cases involving violations of the rules and regulations of the SGA and its constitution.
- B. The Judicial Board shall have vested judicial power by this Constitution and any rules or regulations which may be established pursuant to this Constitution.

Section 2: Composition. The body shall be arranged in the following order: three males, three females, and one Chief Justice.

Section 3: Eligibility.

- A. Judicial Committee.
 - a. Must have served on the SGA one semester prior to appointment.
 - b. Undergraduate student whose GPA is no less than a 2.5 cumulative.

c. Appointments to the Judicial committee shall be made by the SGA President and subject to a two-thirds vote of the legislature.

i. Appointments will be made by the end of Spring semester.

ii. The President of the SGA shall have the power to remove any member of the Judicial committee when they accumulate two unexcused absences for any reason.

B. The Chief Justice.

a. Shall be a non-voting member.

b. Must have served on the SGA one semester prior to appointment and maintain a GPA of no less than a 2.5 cumulative.

Article VII Elections

Section 1: Election Procedure for Officers

A. Petitions for SGA officers can be picked up from Monday of the second full week February until the Thursday of the third full week of February. These petitions will be available in the Student Life Office.

B. A qualifications meeting for candidates will be held in the SGA Meeting Room at 3:00 P.M. on the Friday of the third full week of February. All petitions must be turned in at this time.

C. Campaigning will begin at 8:00 A.M. following the qualifications meeting.

D. Elections will be held on Monday and Tuesday of the first full week of March. If a runoff is necessary, it will be held on the Thursday following the official election.

Section 2: Election Procedure for Senators

A. Petitions may be picked up on the Monday of the 1st full week of April until the Thursday of the 2nd week. These petitions will be available in the Student Affairs Office.

B. A qualifications meeting for candidates will be held in the SGA meeting room at 3:00 P.M. on the Friday of the second week of April. All petitions must be turned in at this time.

Section 3: Clause for Election Procedures

A. On behalf of the SGA, the Student Life Office has the right to change the dates concerning elections, which are stated above, if a schedule conflict should arise with these dates as applied to the school calendar.

Section 4: Attorney General Authority

A. In order to ensure that all students are aware of upcoming SGA elections, the Attorney General, on behalf of the SGA will run an advertisement campaign via social media platforms.

Section 5: Campaign Rules

A. A candidate may acquire up to \$150.00 in personal expenses and may receive an unlimited amount of donations.

B. No campaigning materials will be placed on walls, doors, bulletin boards, trees, or in classrooms.

C. Campaigning is allowed on the day of the election; however, a candidate must refrain from campaigning within a campus computer lab on the day of elections.

D. All campaign materials must be down by noon the day following the election. If campaign materials are not taken down during this time period, the candidate will be fined \$50.00. After a period of 14 days, the fine will be increased by 50%.

E. Any alternative modes not outlined in the petition for campaigning must be approved by the Student Life Office or Attorney General.

Section 6: Ballot Counting and Posting of Results

A. The winners of elections will be based on a simple majority, which is equal to 50 percent plus one of all ballots cast.

B. In the event of where elected positions have more than one position available, the top vote-getters of that election will hold those positions.

C. The results of the SGA elections dealing with constitutional amendments, officer elections, and senator elections shall be sent out by e-mail to all UWA students by the Student Life Office.

D. Newly elected officers will become ex-officio members of the executive cabinet. Prior to taking office, it will be mandatory that all new officers attend all meetings of spring semester. The new legislature will take office the first Monday of May.

Section 7: Vacancies

A. Any vacancy shall be filled by the following process. Any candidate interested in a position must turn in a written request to the SGA President. The written requests shall be on file in the SGA office. A candidate will be recommended by the President for ratification by a two-thirds vote by the legislature.

Article IX Impeachment

Section 1: Legislature

- A. The legislature shall have the sole authority in all impeachment proceedings.
- B. A three-quarter majority of votes of the legislature shall be necessary for removal from office.

Section 2: Charges

- A. Any officer or senator failing to meet their qualifications and duties as stated in Article V may have impeachment charges brought against them by any member of the legislature.
- B. Impeachment charges must first be brought before the Judicial Committee.

Article X Organizations

Section 1: Greek

- A. Each Greek social fraternity and sorority shall meet the membership requirements of their respective council in order to maintain voting privileges in the Student Government Association.
- B. If a social fraternity or sorority loses recognition by their council, the organization shall lose recognition and voting privileges within the SGA.

Section 2: Organizations

- A. Any group whose activities are not offered for college credit is considered to be an organization. Organizations that have previously received funding from the SGA are limited to funding from the organizational account. Any group whose activities are offered for college credit are eligible to receive funds from academic co-sponsorship.
- B. Each organization shall maintain a minimum of eight active members excluding honor societies.

C. It is the responsibility of all organizations on campus to submit a list of active members, current advisors, and the financial statement of that organization when they request financial aid from the SGA. They shall also submit the names of two members who will serve as their representatives to the SGA and all new members names prior to the first meeting of the semester.

D. Any organization that misses more than two meetings may no longer be eligible to receive SGA organizational funding.

Section 3: Constitutions

A. Any group seeking to be recognized as an organization by the SGA should follow the procedure laid out in the new student organization policy.

Section 4: Organizational Funding

A. The SGA will allot no more than \$450.00 to any organization on campus. An organization must submit their request to the SGA Finance Committee, which will be appointed as needed by the President of the SGA. The required material must be submitted to the Finance Committee at least one week prior to the date that the organizational funds are needed. The Finance Committee will evaluate the organization's request to make sure that all required materials have been submitted, and then bring the request before the SGA along with their ruling. The SGA may allot funds to help an organization with their registration fees and traveling costs to their national or regional conventions, and the SGA may only allot funds to help the minimal required numbers of organizational members to attend. An organization may request funds any number of times, but may receive funds only once per fiscal year. The fiscal year will consist of time in which the new budget is approved through the end of that budget year, or at the time the organizational budget is depleted. No funds will be transferred from any other fund into the organizational fund, nor will discretionary funds be used to help fund an organization. The legislative body is under no obligation to give funds to any organization unless it deems necessary.

Article XI Amendments

Amendments to this constitution shall originate through the legislature. All proposed amendments shall be typed and signed by a senator of the SGA. They shall be given to the Secretary by the Wednesday prior to the next business meeting. All proposed amendments shall then be investigated by the by-laws committee prior to consideration of the legislature. If the proposed amendment receives a two-thirds confirmation vote from the legislature, it must then go before a vote of the student body, where it must receive a two-thirds vote to be enacted.

Article XIII By-Laws

Section 1: Academic Co-Sponsorship

- A. Any group whose activities are offered for college credit are eligible to receive funds from the SGA as an academic co-sponsorship.
- B. The legislative body is under no obligation to give funds to any group under the academic co-sponsoring program.
- C. The SGA will allot no more than \$675 to any group requesting academic co-sponsorship during a particular school year.
- D. Any group requesting funds from the SGA must submit their request to the SGA Finance Committee at least one week prior to the date that the group is scheduled to appear before the SGA. The request should include a complete budget and should indicate the amount of money being requested from the SGA. A list of other contributors towards the activity or project and their amount of support should also be provided.
- E. When funds are being requested to support field-trips, a list of students going on the trip must be submitted to the Finance Committee. For trips, SGA funds may only be requested to cover lodging, transportation, and registration.
- F. The Finance Committee will make a report to the legislative body whether the group should be funded. The Finance Committee will also give recommendation.

Section 2: Voting Privileges

- A. Must be a recognized student organization.
- B. A two-thirds majority of votes of the present legislature shall be necessary to receive voting privileges.
- C. Organizations not present to meetings for one semester will automatically lose their legislative chair.
- D. Must be recognized for one semester before petitioning for voting privileges.
- E. One semester probation for organizations receiving new voting privileges. If while on probation an organization loses its vote, it will automatically lose their Legislative Chair and not be able to petition for a vote for two semesters (including summer).

Section 3: Voting Privileges During Elections

- A. All graduate and undergraduate students taking a minimum of six semester hours on the University of West Alabama campus may vote in University elections.