

# *Constitution of the Washington College Student Government Association*

## **Preamble**

We the students of Washington College, in order to promote our welfare, represent our opinion, endorse social feeling, protect the best interest of our college, and foster cooperation among ourselves and our community do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution for the Washington College Student Government Association.

## **I. Legislative Powers**

- A. The legislative power of the Student Government Association shall be vested in the Senate.
- B. The Senate shall be composed of members who are elected yearly, by their respective constituents.
  1. Senators shall be elected by petition at the beginning of each fall semester, except class officers.
  2. The class officers of each class shall serve as Senators.
  3. The number of representatives from each class shall be prescribed by the minimums given in the by-laws.
- C. Petitions for Senate shall be accepted no later than the third Monday of the fall semester.
- D. The Senate shall convene for the first session on the third Tuesday of the fall semester.
- E. Each senator shall hold one vote; the Speaker shall not cast a vote except in the event of a tie.
- F. The Senate shall provide the direction of the Student Government Association.
- G. The Senate shall hold the power to:
  1. Allocate and administer the funds obtained from the Student Activities fee;
  2. Officiate in all elections held by the Student Government Association;
  3. Introduce, discuss, and vote upon legislation affecting the student body or representing their views;
  4. Override a Review Board veto with a 4/5ths vote.
  5. Establish permanent and temporary committees as needed to conduct the business of the Student Government Association;

6. Elect a Speaker.
- H. The Speaker shall be elected the week before spring break.
1. Each Senator, excluding the nominees, shall vote by secret ballot for one of the nominees.
  2. The Speaker shall serve in their position either until the next scheduled Speaker election, impeachment, or voluntarily vacating office.
  3. If the office of the Speaker becomes vacant, the Parliamentarian will call the next Senate meeting to order, move for new elections, and then turn the gavel over to the new Speaker.
- I. In the temporary absence of a Speaker, the Parliamentarian will serve as acting Speaker.
- J. The Parliamentary authority of the Senate shall be *Robert's Rules of Order*, Newly Revised 11th Edition.

## II. **Executive Powers**

- A. The Executive power of the Student Government Association shall be vested in an Executive Board which shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the Director of Communications and Office Management, and the Secretaries of all departments outlined in the Executive Board by-laws. The President is the chair of the Executive Board.
- B. The election of the President, and the Vice President shall be held one week before spring break and will take office at the second Senate meeting after spring break.
- C. President and Vice President shall be elected to one year terms as follows:
1. The President and Vice President shall be elected separately, and serve a term of one year unless removed from office, or in the case of a resignation.
  2. If the President vacates office, the Vice President shall assume all duties of the office and become President.
  3. If for any reason the Vice President vacates their office, the President within two weeks shall name a successor who must be confirmed by a 3/5 vote of the Senate.
- D. The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Student Government Association with the Vice President serving as their principal assistant.
- E. The Vice President shall act as the Chief Operating Officer for the Student Government Association.
- F. Secretaries shall head the permanent executive departments as outlined in the by-laws. These Secretaries will be elected, within one week of returning from spring break, every year by the new Review Board.

### III. **Judicial Powers**

- A. The Judicial power of the Student Government Association shall be vested in the Honor Board.
- B. The number of members, operation, and procedure of the Honor Board shall be prescribed by the student handbook and the faculty authorities.
- C. The Honor Board Chair will be elected by a majority vote of the sitting Review Board prior to the new Executive Board assuming office.
- D. If the Honor Board Chair vacates their office, the remaining members of the Review Board appoint a successor by a majority vote. If the Review Board vote is a tie after 5 ballots, the vote shall be put to the Senate with the candidate receiving the most votes assuming the office immediately.
- E. The Honor Board Members are selected by the Review Board.
  - 1. Honor Board Chair shall organize and facilitate Honor Board applications and interviews.

### IV. **Review Powers**

- A. The power to interpret this Constitution and its by-laws shall be vested in the Review Board, chaired by the Parliamentarian.
- B. The Review Board shall act as a liaison between the branches of government, solve disputes, and act as a steering committee for the Student Government Association.
- C. The Review Board shall include the Parliamentarian, Speaker of the Senate, Financial Controller, President, and Honor Board Chair.
- D. The new Parliamentarian shall be elected by a majority vote of the sitting Review Board prior to the new Executive Board assuming office.
  - 1. If the Parliamentarian vacates office, the remaining members of the Review Board appoint a successor by a majority vote. If the Review Board vote is a tie after 5 ballots, the vote shall be put to the Senate with the candidate receiving the most votes assuming the office immediately.
- E. The Financial Controller shall serve as the principal executor of the student activities fee and shall have the power to distribute funds as the Senate prescribes.
- F. The Financial Controller shall also advise the Senate on all actions concerning the Student Government Association's funds. They shall work to maintain the health of the Student Government Association's monetary position through advocating fundraising and responsible spending.
- G. The new Financial Controller shall be selected by a majority vote of the sitting Review Board prior to the new Executive Board assuming office.

1. If the Financial Controller vacates their office, the remaining members of the Review Board appoint a successor by a majority vote. If the Review Board vote is a tie after 5 ballots, the vote shall be put to the Senate with the candidate receiving the most votes assuming the office immediately.
- H. At least 3/5ths of the Review Board must affix their signatures to any piece of legislation passed by the Senate for the legislation to have the full force of the Student Government Association.
  1. If the legislation in question is the Budget, the Financial Controller must account for one of those three signatures.
  2. If the budget clause or the 3/5ths requirement is not met, the legislation shall be considered vetoed.
- I. If a veto is overridden by the Senate, the budget clause no longer applies, and the Speaker, Parliamentarian, and President must immediately sign the legislation giving it the full force of the Student Government Association.
- J. All appointments of the Secretaries and the Director of Communications and Office Management will be filled by a vote of the Review Board. The Parliamentarian will only vote on appointments in the case of a tie.

**V. Class Officers**

- A. Each Washington College Class shall elect four officers. The officers shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
  1. The elections for rising Senior, Junior, and Sophomore officers shall take place during the second week in April and shall take office during the final Senate meeting of the year.
  2. All First Year elections shall take place during the last week of September.
- B. Any vacancy shall be filled by appointment from the respective President. If the Presidency is vacated the Vice President shall become President.
- C. The Class Treasurer, advised by the Class President, shall be ultimately responsible for all class funds.
- D. The Class officers shall have the express power to:
  1. Create a class government including a cabinet
  2. Advocate for the best interests of their class

**VI. Ratification and Amendment**

- A. This Constitution shall be considered ratified when passed by a 4/5ths vote of the Senate.
- B. Once ratified, this Constitution and the by-laws included with it shall take effect immediately.

- C. The Senate may propose an amendment to this Constitution by a 4/5ths vote; that amendment will be considered accepted when a plurality of the Washington College Student body at large ratifies the amendment through a referendum at such time that is appropriate and convenient.
- D. Student Government Association by-laws and amendments to by-laws must be voted on at two Senate meetings in a row and passed by a 3/5ths vote of Senate each time.

**VII. Impeachment and Removal**

- A. Any officer of the Student Government Association may be impeached by a petition signed by thirty percent of their constituency.
- B. If an officer is impeached, they shall have a hearing with the Senate acting as the jury, in the manner prescribed by the by-laws.
- C. An officer found in violation may appeal to the Review Board on the grounds of improper or unfair trial procedures. The Review Board shall need a 2/5ths vote to accept the appeal, and a 4/5ths vote to overturn the Senate's decision.

**VIII. Conflict of Interest**

- A. No Executive Officer may hold a legislative, judicial, or class officer position.

**IX. Supremacy**

- A. This Constitution, and its by-laws made in pursuance thereof, shall be the supreme authority of the Washington College Student Body.
- B. The officers of every organization shall be bound thereby to anything in this Constitution and its by-laws.
- C. Any constitution, by-laws, or regulations of any Student Government Association sponsored organization in conflict with this Constitution are hereby invalid.

**X. Diversity Statement**

- A. We, the students, faculty, staff, and Board of Visitors and Governors of Washington College, welcome, invite, value, and support a diverse community of individuals. We strive to create a place where all can study, work, and thrive. We believe in the worth, dignity, and safety of human beings of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, gender identities and/or expressions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, cultural backgrounds, cognitive or physical abilities, emotional and behavioral characteristics, ages, and educational levels. In the pursuit of academic excellence, we endeavor to be a community made up of people from a variety of backgrounds with differing perspectives, life experiences, religious, philosophical, and political beliefs, lifestyles, and

ideologies. We pledge to create a respectful and supportive environment for collaboration, empathy, and the building of meaningful relationships among members of Washington College. We commit to fostering a more equitable, inclusive, and engaged community that embraces all the complexity that each person brings to campus.

1. We will empower all members to contribute ideas, ask questions, contest assumptions, and revise points of view through civil debate.
  2. We will confront and challenge attempts to dehumanize others through prejudiced attitudes, behaviors, and practices that exclude, demean, or marginalize any individual or group.
  3. We will encourage alumni, parents, visitors, guests, and the wider community to respect and embrace the values and behaviors that we embody.
- B. Our promise is to cultivate a continuous desire and ability to understand and meaningfully engage with different perspectives and experiences, including those of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups. We seek to contribute to the full intellectual and emotional development of every person and to the enrichment of our local, regional, national, and global communities.