

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY STUDENT BODY CONSTITUTION

(Amended March 4, 2020)

PREAMBLE:

We the students of Southern Methodist University (SMU) adopt this Constitution to establish a student government to provide the means for discussion and action on any subject pertaining to the University by:

- 1) Establishing a forum to represent all students by enforcing the Constitution of the SMU Student Body and the Student Senate By-Laws;
- 2) Acting as a communicative body among the students, administration and faculty;
- 3) Protecting the rights of students and ensuring a student voice in the decision-making process of the University;
- 4) Establishing policies which govern the actions of students; and
- 5) Promoting opportunities for intellectual growth.

ARTICLE I

THE STUDENT BODY

The Student Body shall consist of all currently enrolled students of SMU. The Student Body may also be referred to as the Students' Association.

ARTICLE II

THE STUDENT SENATE

Section 1. Purpose

The Student Senate shall represent the interests of students to the entire University as the official student legislative body.

Section 2. Powers and Responsibilities

The Student Senate shall:

1. Initiate action on student concerns;
2. Allocate and withdraw Student Activity Fee funds;
3. Administer all Student Body elections;
4. Review the annual budget of the University;
5. Establish criteria for sanctioning and reviewing all student organizations;
6. Oversee and review the Student Code of Conduct;
7. Have the power to approve or reject all appointments made by the President of the Students' Association; and
8. Have the power to remove any of its members from the Student Senate.

Section 3. Membership

Before each election, the Membership Chair of the Student Senate will verify enrollment figures with the University Registrar to determine the number of seats available for the coming election. The membership of the Student Senate shall consist of:

1. The President, the Vice-President, the Treasurer, and the Secretary of the Student Body, who shall be ex-officio, voting members;
2. Student Senate Officers, identified in the Student Senate By-Laws;
3. Committee Chairs, who shall have no vote; and
4. Senators from each school of the University.

There shall be one representative per three hundred currently enrolled students, excluding first-year students as defined in Article II Section 3(5), with a minimum of two representatives per school. If the number of currently enrolled students in a school is at least one-hundred-fifty-one in excess of any multiple of three hundred, then that school shall receive one additional representative.

- a. For the purposes of Senate representation under this document the Pre-Major population of the student body will be treated as if it were a school.
- b. The Student Senate shall reserve one seat for a graduate representative, as well as reserve one seat for an undergraduate representative, of each academic school in which both population types are present.
 - i. In those schools with mixed graduate and undergraduate populations, if at the time of the spring general election it emerges that only one eligible undergraduate or only one eligible graduate student has applied to run for a representative position that student shall be considered dully elected.
 - ii. If multiple graduate students or multiple undergraduate students apply to run in the election to represent a school with a mixed graduate and undergraduate population the graduate student and undergraduate student who respectively receive the most votes shall be dully elected.
 - iii. If none of the undergraduate students in a school apply for their school's reserved representative seat then that seat will be opened up to those graduate students who have applied to run to represent to that school in the

Senate, and alternatively, if none of the graduate students in a school apply for their school's reserved representative seat then that seat will be opened up to those undergraduate students who have applied to run to represent to that school in the Student Senate.

- iv. Any additional representative seats beyond the two reserved to the undergraduate and graduate populations of the schools in question to which the school in question is entitled shall be filled by those students who received the highest number of votes for the school representative seats in question without regard to their status as undergraduate or graduate students.
 - v. If a vacancy occurs in a reserved senate seat, the Membership Committee, though encouraged to seek out and interview qualified students from the graduate or undergraduate population who had held the reserved seat before the vacancy in question occurred, shall not be required to recommend to the Senate a replacement from the graduate or undergraduate population who had held the reserved seat before the vacancy in question occurred.
 - c. Students in their second semester of study in their current academic program at SMU who have completed at least the minimum number of credit hours required for one semester of study in their current academic program and met all other requirements for a school senator seat may apply to fill a vacant seat for the current year.
 - d. Any student in the process of completing at least the minimum number of credit hours required for two semesters of study in their current academic program is eligible in the General Election for a school senator seat for the school in which they belong at the time of the election.
 - i. If the minimum credit hour requirements are not met, a student will forfeit his or her seat.
5. First-year Student Senators
- There shall be one representative per three hundred currently enrolled undergraduate full-time and part-time first-year students. First-year students are defined as individuals in their first or second full semester at

SMU who do not meet the definition of transfer students. If the number of currently enrolled first-year students is one-hundred-fifty-one in excess of any multiple of three hundred, then the first-year class shall receive one additional representative.

6. The Transfer Senator

Transfer students are defined as individuals who have attempted 30 or more credit hours at any institution other than SMU after graduating secondary school. There shall be one senator elected to represent the transfer student population of the university. The transfer Senator shall be elected according to the procedure laid out in Article IV Section 2 of this Constitution.

7. Special Interest Senators

In order to ensure the preservation of the best interests of the students of SMU, the Student Senate shall devote Special Interest Senator positions to represent pertinent issues of minority students. Among these, the Student Senate shall reserve positions for qualifying Ethnic Minority Senators.

- a. The Ethnic Minority Senators must represent an ethnic group as recognized by the Office of the Registrar. There will be only one Special Interest Senator Seat per ethnic or special interest group. Candidates must be a member of their representative constituency as verified by the Office of the Registrar. Each Ethnic Minority Senator shall have a vote.
- b. When the population of an unrepresented ethnic or special interest group reaches or exceeds 150 and desires to have a Special Interest Senator seat in the Student Senate, that group shall petition the Student Senate for a Special Interest Senator seat. For a petition to be considered, it must contain signatures from at least 1/3 of the students in the ethnic group. The petition must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Student Senate for the seat to be established. The Student Senate shall not initiate the petition process in any way.
- c. Once a Special Interest Senator seat has been established, it will remain until that Senator's special interest group makes up at least 15 percent of the total student body for at least two consecutive years, or by means described in the Student Senate Bylaws. It will then be eliminated at the end of the term.
- d. The Student Senate shall communicate the provisions of this section to any and all pertinent special interest groups that approach adequate population to qualify for a special interest seat in order to

provide information regarding the option of establishing a Special Interest Senator seat. Groups shall not be required to have a special interest seat.

8. The Comptroller, who shall maintain all monies of the Students' Association and shall have no vote;
9. All committee members who shall have no vote.

Section 4.

The SMU Student Senate shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, veteran status, religion, political or social opinion, age, disability, or sexual orientation. The Office of Institutional Access and Equity has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy.

ARTICLE III STUDENT BODY OFFICERS

Section 1. The President

The President of the Student Body shall:

1. Be the official representative of the Student Body as its liaison to the administration of SMU;
2. Assist in the initiation of programs and legislation;
3. Assist Student Senate Officers in discharging their duties;
4. Assist all officers in overseeing the execution of all pieces of legislation passed by the Student Senate and all Senate business;
5. Appoint the following, subject to majority Senate approval
 - a. All members of Student Senate standing committees unless the Student Senate provides otherwise in its By-Laws;
 - b. All members filling vacant Senate positions unless the Student Senate provides otherwise in its By-Laws;
 - c. All student members of University-wide Governance bodies;
6. Call Special meetings of Senate upon his/her discretion;
7. Coordinate with the other officers and the Senate advisor the individual hired, subject to Senate approval, as Comptroller for the Students' Association funds; and
8. Assist in planning of the calendar for the following year.

Section 2. The Vice-President

The Vice-President of the Student Body shall:

1. Serve as the coordinator of activities of the Student Senate;
2. Serve as the Presiding Officer of the Student Senate for the first meeting of the new term, voting only in case of a tie;
3. Assist all officers in overseeing the execution of all pieces of legislation passed by the Student Senate and all Student Senate business;
4. Prepare and present a Student Senate budget to that body for amendment and approval unless the Student Senate provides otherwise in its By-Laws;
5. Perform the duties of the President in the President's absence;
6. Succeed the President upon vacancy in office;
7. Assist in planning the calendar for the following year.

Section 3. The Treasurer

The Treasurer of the Student Body shall:

1. Serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the Student Body;
2. Be ultimately responsible for the financial affairs of the Student Senate;
3. Establish and maintain accurate records of all financial matters pertaining to the Student Senate;
4. Prepare an annual budget with the cooperation of the Finance Committee Chair, Investments Committee Chair, and members of the Cabinet;
5. Prepare and report a monthly financial overview of the student body fund;
6. Advise the President and the Cabinet on all financial matters;
7. Assist all officers in overseeing the execution of all pieces of legislation passed by the Student Senate and all Student Senate business;
8. Coordinate with the other officers and the Senate advisor the individual hired, subject to Senate approval, as Comptroller for the Students' Association funds; and
9. Fulfill additional duties as deemed necessary by the President or the Cabinet.

Section 4. The Secretary

The Secretary of the Student Body shall:

1. Serve as Secretary of the Student Senate, maintaining all records;
2. Assist all officers in overseeing the execution of all pieces of legislation passed by the Student Senate and all Student Senate business;
3. Serve as Secretary of the Student Senate, maintaining all records;
4. Serve as an ex-officio voting member of the Student senate;

5. Assist all officers in overseeing the execution of all pieces of legislation passed by the Student Senate and all Student Senate business;
6. Assist officers in the planning of the calendar for the following year;
7. Review and compile changes to the Student Code of Conduct;
8. Serve as chairperson of the Student Senate Code of Conduct Revision Committee;
9. Interact with the Student Senate and university administrators in the presentation of all decisions of the Code of Conduct Revision Committee regarding proposed changes periodically throughout the year, as designated by the Senate calendar; and
10. Accept petitions of referendum

ARTICLE IV

STUDENT BODY ELECTIONS

Section 1. First-year Student Senators

First-year Student Senators shall:

1. Be elected only by currently enrolled full-time and part-time first-year undergraduate students. A first-year student is defined under Article II, Section 3(5) of this document.
2. Be elected before October 1 of each year; and
3. Serve from the next meeting of the Student Senate after their election through the annual Spring inauguration of the following year.

Section 2. Transfer Senator

The Transfer Student Senator shall:

1. Be elected only by currently enrolled full-time and part-time transfer graduate and undergraduate students of the university. Undergraduate transfer status shall be determined via the definition in Article II Section 3(6) of this document and graduate transfer status shall be based on the definition used by the individual graduate programs and the university registrar.
2. Be elected before October 1 of each year; and
3. Serve from the next meeting of the Student Senate after their election through the annual Spring inauguration of the following year.
4. There shall be only one transfer Senator seat.

Section 3. Other Senators

All other Senators shall:

1. Be elected only by the currently enrolled full-time and part-time students of their respective schools or special interest groups, as defined by the University Registrar.
2. A student may only run for one senator seat per election.

Section 4. Officers

The President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Student Body shall:

1. Have previously served as a Senator or Chair of a standing committee within the Student Senate, as defined by Article II of this document.
2. Be elected only by the currently enrolled full-time and part-time students.
3. Serve from their inauguration to the annual Spring inauguration of the following year; and
4. Be elected:
 - a. By the majority in a general election; or
 - b. By the majority in a run-off election between the candidates receiving the two largest amounts of votes cast in the general election.

Section 5. Requirements for Office

All students elected under this Constitution, unless another article or section of this Constitution provides otherwise, shall be:

1. SMU students enrolled full-time in a university degree granting program, or students who are enrolled in a co-op program, or those students with minimum hours to graduate, or a full-time or part-time student seeking a graduate, doctoral, or professional degree, including students completing a graduate dissertation or thesis;
2. Be enrolled in the school from which elected at least one-half of the term;
3. Have at least a 2.5 semester and cumulative GPA if an undergraduate, or be in academic good standing with his or her respective graduate, doctoral, or professional degree program if a graduate student;
4. Complete required training before being sworn into office. The required training and election dates will be determined by the outgoing officers and advisor and be included in the calendar for the following year; and
5. Meet all other certification requirements as set by the Student Senate.

Section 6. Special Elections

1. Initiative and Referendum

A referendum to initiate new legislation or to repeal existing legislation may be called:

- a. By a two-thirds vote of the Student Senate; or
- b. By a petition containing the signatures and student identification numbers of three percent of the currently enrolled full-time and part-time students. Signatures and student identification numbers may be submitted electronically through a student's official University e-mail account only if the student making an electronic submission is studying abroad, including attendance at all satellite campuses.

Election on a called referendum shall take place within three school weeks of the date of the Student Senate vote or within three weeks of the verification of the petition presented to the Secretary of the Student Body. The referendum will then be approved by a majority vote of the voting student body.

2. Recall

An election to recall a representative:

- a. May be called by a petition containing the signatures and student identification numbers of ten percent of the representative's constituency, which shall be defined as the eligible voters for the seat in question. Signatures and student identification numbers may be submitted through a student's official University e-mail account only if the student making an electronic submission is studying abroad, including attendance at all satellite campuses;
- b. Shall be voted upon within three weeks of the presentation of the petition to the Secretary of the Student Body; and
- c. Shall pass by a two-thirds vote of the constituency.

3. Vacancy in the Office of Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary

Upon the vacancy in the office of Vice-President, Treasurer, or Secretary:

- a. The President of the Student Body shall appoint an interim Student Body Officer, with a 2/3 majority approval of the Student Senate; and
- b. The currently enrolled full-time and part-time students shall elect a replacement within three school weeks of vacancy, who shall serve for the remainder of the term of office.
 - i. If the interim Student Body Officer is running uncontested in the special election (as of the application due date, which is no less than two school weeks after the vacancy occurs), no election will be held,

and the interim Student Body Officer will assume the Student Body Officer position for the remainder of the term of office.

ARTICLE VI CONSTITUTIONAL APPEALS

Interpretations of this constitution may be appealed or disputed:

1. By any Student Body Officer or Student Senator by the procedure outlined in the Student Senate By-Laws; or
2. By any member of the Students' Association with the signatures and student identification numbers of three percent of the currently enrolled full-time or part-time students, by the procedure outlined in the Student Senate By-Laws.

ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended:

1. By a three-fourths vote of the Student Senate. The amendment must:
 - a. Be voted on by the Student Senate one meeting after its presentation to the chamber; and
 - b. Be ratified within three school weeks of the Student Senate vote by two-thirds of the voting Student Body.
2. By a petition containing signatures and student identification numbers of ten percent of the currently enrolled full-time and part-time students. Signatures and student identification numbers may be submitted electronically through a student's official University e-mail account only if studying abroad, including attendance at all satellite campuses. The amendment must be ratified by two-thirds of the voting student body within three weeks of the verification of the petition presented to the Student Senate Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VIII RATIFICATION

This constitution and any amendments shall become effective upon ratification by the Student Body.