



# **Valdosta State University**

## **Student Government Association Constitution**

### **PREAMBLE**

We, the students of Valdosta State University in order to form a democratic, efficient, and responsible student government; to represent, lead, and unify the student body, to decide and act responsibly for the students' interest, and to work with the faculty, staff, and administration of the university in the pursuit of our continual improvement, do hereby establish the Student Government Association of Valdosta State University and adopt this Constitution. The Valdosta State University Student Government Association shall serve as the mechanism to ensure students at Valdosta State University feel heard and valued.

If any part of the SGA Constitution conflicts with Board of Regents (BOR), University System of Georgia (USG) or VSU policies and procedures; then BOR, USG, and VSU policies and procedures will be adhered to.

## **ARTICLE I: THE ORGANIZATION**

### **Section 1: Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association, hereinafter referred to as the “SGA,” of Valdosta State University, hereinafter referred to as “VSU.” The primary purpose of the SGA shall be to represent and voice the concerns of all students of VSU in all university matters, while creating legislation and developing programs and activities of practical value to the student body. It is recognized that Valdosta State University is a state educational institution operating under the authority of Board of Regents Policy. Since the Board of Regents dictates that each state educational institution has an established student government, the Student Government Association derives its power from the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

### **Section 2: Branches of Government**

- a. The VSU SGA shall be divided into two branches: The Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch. These branches shall work closely to fulfill the mission of the SGA.
- b. No power or authority belonging to one branch shall be applied to the other unless otherwise stated in this Constitution.

### **Section 3: Membership**

- a. All students, by virtue of their enrollment at VSU, hereinafter referred to as “the student body,” shall be subject to this Constitution, the SGA Bylaws, the University Code of Conduct as it appears in the VSU Student Handbook, and the Blazer Creed.
- b. The right to vote in any student body election or referendum shall not be denied to any currently enrolled VSU student.
- c. All students shall be subject to the rules and regulations of the university, but these rules shall at no time and in no way abridge the students’ rights as defined under the Constitution of the United States of America or of the State of Georgia.
- d. Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, shall be extended to all students without regard to age, ethnicity, gender, disability, color, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or sex and gender identity.

### **Section 4: Constitutional Committees**

- a. Within Student Government Association there will exist three Constitutional Committees: The Standards Review Committee, the Executive Council, and the Blazer Allocation Committee. The duties and powers of these committees shall be enumerated in the SGA Bylaws. These are joint committees having both members of the Legislative and Executive branch and are the primary governing committees of the SGA.

## **ARTICLE II: THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Senate. The size and composition of the Senate may be set in the SGA Bylaws.

### **Section 1: Chambers**

- a. The Senate shall be divided into two chambers: the Chamber for Academic Affairs and the Chamber for Campus affairs.
- b. All members of the Senate must be qualified under the SGA Elections Code.

## **Section 2: Powers and Responsibilities of the Legislative Branch**

- a. The Senate shall formulate such policies, regulations, and recommendations that shall relate to the student body. The specific powers and responsibilities of the Senate are as follows:
  1. The Senate shall have the power to make recommendations on issues relevant to the general welfare of the student body.
  2. The Senate shall have the power to pass two forms of legislation; resolutions and bills. Resolutions will make clear the official position of the VSU Student Body, and Bills will amend the SGA Bylaws and SGA Code of Conduct.
  3. The Senate shall have the power to make statutes governing the operations of the SGA.
  4. Senators shall document and show proof of five hours of the SGA related work for every four weeks throughout the Fall and Spring semesters. These hours will not include mandatory meetings of the Senate and Chambers. The fulfillment of these hours shall be ensured by the executive branch
  5. Senators must be present in order to vote on any item or issue; there shall be no voting by proxy.
  6. A quorum of the Senate shall be considered two-thirds of all members of the Senate on roll and must be present in order to conduct official business (a first reading of proposed legislation is allowed in the absence of quorum, however no voting may take place).
  7. The Senate shall have the power to override an SGA Presidential veto on any statute or recommendation by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Senate.

## **Section 3: Officers of the Senate**

- a. The Officers of the Senate shall be the President of the Senate, President Pro-Tempore, the Parliamentarian, the Senate Director of Campus Affairs, the Senate Director of Academic Affairs, and the Blazer Allocation Committee Chairperson. All Officers of the Senate shall be voting members of the Executive Council.
- b. The President Pro-Tempore and Parliamentarian shall be nominated and elected from within the Senate and may be removed by two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the senate.
- c. The Senate Directors of Academic Affairs and Campus Affairs shall be appointed by the SGA Vice-President in consort with the President Pro-Tempore and reported to the Senate and may be removed from office by the SGA Vice-President.
- d. The Blazer Allocation Committee chairperson shall be appointed by the president in consort with the SGA Treasurer and may be removed from office by the SGA President.

## **Section 4: Duties of Senate officers**

All officers of the Senate shall remain voting members of the Senate, report information relevant to the execution of their specific duties at meetings of the entire Senate, and must fulfill all duties outlined as officers and senators as prescribed in the SGA Governing Documents.

- a. The following duties and powers are vested in the President of the Senate
  1. Shall be the SGA Vice-President who shall preside over and conduct all meetings of the Senate.

2. Shall have the power to remove senators and fill vacancies in accordance with the SGA Governing Documents.
  3. May, in the case of a tie, vote on any measure before the Senate.
  4. Shall outline the structure of Senate Committees and appoint members to Senate chambers and committees.
  5. Shall have the power to withhold vote on any measure before the senate to encourage further consideration for up to two weeks unless such directive is overridden by two-thirds vote of the Senate.
- b. The following duties and powers shall be vested in the office of the President Pro-Tempore
1. Shall be a voting member of the Senate.
  2. Will perform all duties and responsibilities of the SGA Vice-President in the event the Vice-President is absent from a meeting unless otherwise directed by the SGA President.
  3. Shall actively assist with the appointment of members to Senate chambers and committees.
  4. Shall take up special tasks, projects, or initiatives as deemed necessary by the SGA Vice-President in regards to both internal and external matters.
  5. Shall work in consort with the SGA President and Vice President to ensure that legislation approved by the Senate is considered by the Administration (and/or other authorities) and is enacted with expediency, when possible.
- c. The following duties and powers shall be vested in the office of the Parliamentarian:
1. Shall be a voting member of the Senate and will perform all the duties and responsibilities of the President Pro-Tempore in the event of their absence.
  2. Shall be responsible for ensuring all members of the executive board and Senate adhere to the SGA Constitution, and the SGA Bylaws.
  3. Shall act as an advisor to the presiding officer on matters of parliamentary procedure.
  4. Shall assist the President Pro-Tempore in all necessary matters as determined by the President Pro-Tempore.
- d. The following duties shall be vested in the office of the Senate Directors:
1. Shall lead efforts of the chamber in coordination with any committee chairpersons, executive board members, and other senate officers.
  2. Shall assume all duties delegated by the SGA Vice-President in consort with the President Pro-Tempore.
- e. The following duties and powers shall be vested in the office of the Blazer Allocation Committee Chairperson:
1. Shall perform all the duties of the Treasurer in their temporary absence.
  2. Shall assist the SGA Treasurer with the execution of his/her duties as deemed appropriate by the SGA Treasurer.

**Section 7: Meetings of the Senate**

- a. The SGA Executive Council has the ability to set the meeting schedule for the Senate. The SGA President has the authority to cancel senate meetings in the event of inclement weather or major university events. The executive board shall attend these weekly meetings.

- b. These meetings of the SGA shall be open to all members of the University community.

### **ARTICLE III: THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

#### **Section 1: Composition**

- a. The Student Government Association Executive Board shall consist of the offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.
- b. The purpose of the Executive Branch shall be to supervise, maintain, and advise on policies, regulations, and recommendations that are formulated by the Legislative Branch in the interest, convenience, and necessity of the student body.
- c. The Executive Branch will initiate and maintain projects of interest for the students, which have been approved through the proper channels and shall recommend to the Legislative Branch any legislation deemed necessary.
- d. The Office of the Chief of Staff and Director of Communication shall exist within the Executive Branch along with necessary deputies and assistants. All such positions are appointed by the SGA President.

#### **Section 2: Terms and Qualifications of the Executive Board:**

- a. Shall be an enrolled student in good standing at the university at the time of election and maintain that standing throughout their term of office.
- b. Shall hold office from the date of their swearing in until April 30 of the following calendar year, and be elected by the voting student body as prescribed in the SGA Elections Code.
- c. Shall not be a member of the Student Conduct Council, the Campus Activities Board, or the manager or managing editor of any campus communications funded by student activity fees.
- d. Shall be required to take the oath of office as administered by the University President or the Vice President of Student Affairs.

#### **Section 3: Duties of the SGA President or Student Body President**

- a. Shall serve as the liaison between students, faculty, staff, administration, and the community.
- b. Shall execute, supervise, and maintain all such policies, regulations, and recommendations as formulated by the Legislative Branch.
- c. Shall represent the students of VSU at official university functions.
- d. Shall have full discretion to appoint members to committees and councils of the university as requested by the Faculty, Staff, and Administration.
- e. Shall have the power to call a special session of the Senate, shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the SGA, and shall see that all actions taken by the Senate are executed if at all possible.
- f. Shall serve as the University delegate to the Student Advisory Council of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and shall have the authority to appoint Student Advisory Council delegate.
- g. May be appointed to any standing university committee or board other than those of the SGA, or may appoint a representative to serve in such capacity.
- h. May create positions, fill positions, and remove appointees from positions within the executive branch.

- i. The power of vetoing any measure, legislation or otherwise, by the SGA Senate before its passage and before its acceptance by the student body, in part or as a whole, is solely vested in the Office of the SGA President. The President has ten days to issue a veto.
- j. Shall set the hours and supervise all members of the executive board as it relates to the execution of their duties and fulfillment of work requirements.

**Section 4: Duties of the Vice President or Student Body Vice-President**

- a. Shall preside over meetings of the entire Senate.
- b. Shall assist in the coordination of meetings between senators and university personnel.
- c. Shall coordinate with university committee appointees to ensure efficiency and fulfillment of duties.
- d. Shall communicate information and concerns of the President to the Senate outside of Senate meetings in coordination with the Director of Communication.
- e. Shall serve in any capacity that will assist the SGA President in the execution of actions taken by the SGA.
- f. Shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the President in the event that the President of the SGA is vacated for any reason.
- g. Shall assume any duties that may be delegated by the President.
- h. Shall ensure that academic verifications of grade point averages of all of the members of SGA are conducted at the beginning of each semester to ensure all individuals are qualified.
- i. Shall work in conjunction with the SGA Secretary and Senate Officers to ensure Senators fulfill their duties.

**Section 5: Duties of the SGA Secretary**

- a. Shall be the recorder of the Senate, unless deemed otherwise by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate, and will assume any other duties delegated by the presiding officer of the Senate.
- b. Shall oversee communication efforts of the organization.
- c. Shall maintain attendance records of Senate members and guests to meetings, and inform the SGA members of their official attendance related expulsion from the SGA.
- d. Shall organize all business to be conducted on the Senate meeting agendas and disseminate in a timely fashion.
- e. Shall disseminate Senate meeting minutes to all members of the Senate as well as the student body through the designated communication channels in a timely fashion.
- f. Shall be responsible for dispatching all legislation requiring executive action to the President of the SGA.
- g. Shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining all records and files that pertain to the SGA.
- h. Shall coordinate supply orders and event reservations on behalf of the SGA.
- i. Shall assume any duties that may be delegated by the President and Vice President.
- j. Shall oversee mandated Senator work hours in coordination with the Vice President.

**Section 6: Duties of the SGA Treasurer**

- a. Shall lead meetings of the Blazer Allocation Committee and vote only in the instance of a tie.
- b. Shall supervise the proper expenditure of all monies of the SGA and shall give a monthly report on these expenditures.
- c. Shall maintain records of all business transactions which involve the SGA funds.

- d. Shall have the responsibility of informing the members of the SGA of all actions taken by the university that involve the student activity fee.
- e. Shall be responsible for the preparation of the budget for the SGA funds.
- f. Shall coordinate meetings with students and organizations wishing to gain funds from the SGA.
- g. Shall monitor the business conducted by the Planning and Budget Council of the University.
- h. Shall assume any other duties delegated by the President and Vice President.

## **ARTICLE IV: IMPEACHMENT**

### **Section 1: Impeachment**

- a. Impeachment procedures shall be stated within the SGA Bylaws.
- b. The Senate shall have the sole power to hear all actions of impeachment against any official of the SGA. Any Senator of the SGA may institute impeachment proceedings against any of its members.
- c. Judgment in the cases of impeachment shall extend to removal from office and disqualification to hold any office in the SGA until the next regular election.

## **ARTICLE V: FINANCES**

### **Section 1: Financial Autonomy**

The SGA shall ensure responsible, prudent oversight and use of all student fees. The Student Government Association is entitled to a reasonable budget derived from the Student Activity Fee to use at the organization's discretion. Moreover, the SGA has the right to set supplemental policy as it relates to the disbursement of funds through the Blazer Allocation Program.

### **Section 2: Due Compensation**

The members of the Executive Branch of the SGA shall receive due compensation for their services, which shall not increase or decrease during their term of office as recommended by the Student Activity Fee Allocation Committee.

### **Section 3: Blazer Allocation Committee**

- a. The Blazer Allocation Committee process for allocating funds shall be outlined in the SGA Bylaws.
- b. The Committee shall be made up of five Senators and the SGA Treasurer.

## **ARTICLE VI: SGA GOVERNING DOCUMENTS**

### **Section 1: Governing Documents**

The Senate shall have the power to establish and amend the SGA Bylaws, SGA Elections Code, and SGA Code of Conduct through the passage and approval of a SGA Bill.

- a. The SGA Bylaws shall further clarify the structure and rules of the SGA.
- b. The SGA Code of Conduct shall be established to outline the expectations of SGA members including attendance.
- c. The SGA Elections Code shall be established to outline Fall and Spring Elections of the SGA.

## **ARTICLE VII: CONSTITUTIONAL RATIFICATION**

### **Section 1: Constitutional Amendment**

- a. Shall require a first and second reading at a Senate meeting. Upon first reading, the Presiding Officer shall not entertain debate. At least one week shall transpire between the first and second reading. Upon second reading, the Presiding Officer shall entertain debate and amendment, and the Senate will vote on the proposed amendment.
- b. Amendments or revisions to this Constitution shall require approval by a majority vote of the entire voting membership of the Senate, and approval by a majority of voting students via referendum.

### **Section 2: Constitutional Approval and Supremacy**

- a. This Constitution shall take effect when approved by the voting majority of the student body via referendum.
- b. In the event the SGA Constitution is amended or ratified the SGA shall be given three (3) consecutive Senate meetings following ratification to make any necessary changes to the Association.
- c. The vote results must be attached to an original copy of the constitution along with the signatures of current officers and be sent to VSU Archives.
- d. Upon ratification, this Constitution and its associated documents shall supersede all previous governing documents, which shall be deemed null and void.