

# *The Constitution and By-Laws of the Student Government Association of Benedictine College*

**Amended as of 22 February 2020**

## ***PREAMBLE***

We, the students of Benedictine College, with the administration, realizing our obligation to influence through representation and committees, the policy and direction of the college community, and conscious of the need for student involvement in the practical application of this influence, determined to promote the general welfare of the student body in its academic, social, cultural, and religious needs, do hereby establish the constitution.

### I. Name

A. The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association of Benedictine College (S.G.A.).

### II. Authority

A. The authority of the Student Government Association is derived from the undergraduate student body of Benedictine College and through the powers delegated by the administration of the College.

### III. Student Body Membership

A. The members of the student body shall consist of all undergraduate students enrolled at Benedictine College.

### IV. Structure of the Student Government Association

A. The S.G.A. shall consist of the following:

1. Executive Board
2. Senators

B. The governing group of the S.G.A shall be called the Student Senate, hereafter referred to as the Senate. All power granted in this constitution and its bylaws shall be vested in the Senate.

C. The membership of the Senate shall be as provided for in the by-laws and shall consist of the following:

1. Student Body President
2. Student Body Vice President
3. Director of Communications
4. Treasurer
5. Director of Clubs
6. Senators

D. The coordinating body of the Senate shall be the Executive Board

1. The composition and duties of the Executive Board shall be defined in the by-laws
2. The Executive Board shall have the power to act in the absence of the Senate, if the said action is required prior to the next scheduled Senate meeting.
3. All other actions of the Executive Board shall be subject to approval by a plurality of the present, non-Executive Board, voting, Senate members.

## V. Meetings

A. Meetings may be called by one of the following:

1. The Student Body President of the Senate.
2. A petition of thirty (30%) percent of the Senate.
3. A petition of ten (10%) percent of the Student Body.

B. Members must be notified of meetings in advance.

C. All business meetings of the Senate shall follow the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise provided by the S.G.A. by-laws or those rules are suspended by three-fourths (3/4) vote of that body.

D. Meetings must be held at least biweekly while classes are in session. Committees will meet at least once every other week.

E. A quorum shall be necessary for transaction of business at Senate meetings and shall consist of one-half (1/2) plus one of the total voting membership.

F. No member of the Senate shall have more than one vote.

## VI. Amendments

A. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed to the Senate by one of the following:

1. Any member of the Executive Board
2. Any member of the Senate.
3. An initiative petition of fifteen (15%) percent of the Student Body.

- B. Ratification occurs by an approval of three-fourths (3/4) of the Senate.
- C. Amendments to this constitution shall be presented to the Administration for ratification after the approval of Senate.

#### VII. By-Laws

- A. The Senate shall have the power to make by-laws to this constitution.
- B. Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by any member of the Senate or by a petition signed by fifteen (15%) percent of the student body.
- C. Amendments to these bylaws shall become part of the by-laws when approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate.

#### VIII. Ratification of the Constitution

- A. The following conditions must be met for ratification of any S.G.A. Constitution
  1. The motion to adopt a new S.G.A. Constitution must be motioned for by any member of Senate.
  2. The Constitution must be approved by three-fourths (3/4) vote of all Senate members.
- B. All other constitutions shall be considered null and void upon ratification of any new S.G.A. Constitution

## **BY-LAWS**

### **I. Student Senate**

#### **A. Duties and powers of the Senate shall be:**

1. To pass legislation.
2. To act as the official voice of the student body of Benedictine College.
3. To influence the policies and direction of the college community.
4. To promote the general welfare of the student body in its academic, social, cultural and religious needs.
5. To veto or reject an appointment from the Executive Board, if deemed necessary.
6. To create any committee that it deems necessary and to prescribe its function and composition.
7. To act as a judicial body in matters of officer removals, approval of executive board actions and to arbitrate in concerns of the student body.
8. To allocate funds to student clubs/programs/events.

#### **B. Membership of the Executive Board**

1. The Executive Board membership shall consist of the Student Body President, Student Body Vice President, Director of Communications, Treasurer, and Director of Clubs.

#### **C. Duties of the Executive Board shall be:**

1. To act as the interpreters of the Constitution.
2. To study and advise the implementation of standing and special committees and to assist in the preparation of the agenda of said committees.
3. To serve, as requested, in the capacity of ex-officio member of the college administration's committees whose student membership is subject to the approval of the Senate.
4. To remove elected S.G.A. personnel.
5. To attend all major functions and activities sponsored by S.G.A.
6. To meet with Student Affairs officials on a regular basis.
7. To prepare detailed tomes (i.e. computer disks, handouts, lists, etc.) to pass on to the upcoming Student Executive Board.
8. To meet with the President and the Cabinet of Benedictine College on a regular basis.
9. To present student concerns to the Board of Directors of Benedictine College at the fall and spring meetings.
10. Each Executive Officer shall serve as an advisor of one Senate committee, except for the student body president.
11. To meet weekly with the Student Activities Director.
12. To establish regular office hours in the S.G.A. office.

#### **D. Duties and Powers of the Student Body President shall be:**

1. To serve as the Chairman of the Senate.
2. To delegate any of his/her duties and/or powers.
3. To serve as spokesperson for the Executive Board
4. To organize a meeting between outgoing and incoming Student Government new officers of the duties they will need to perform during their term of office.
5. To serve as the acting parliamentarian—to guide and advise the Senate in parliamentary procedure (as found in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order) and the rules established in the Constitution and By-laws.
6. To act as liaison between the Faculty, Administration, and Board of Directors, and the S.G.A., including acting as major spokesperson for S.G.A. concerns at meetings of the said groups

E. Duties and Powers of the Student Body Vice President shall be:

1. To assume the responsibilities of the Student Body President in his/her absence.
2. To present the invocation at meetings.
3. To be in charge of conducting elections and to publicize all S.G.A. Executive and Senate winners of said elections.
4. To be responsible for informing newly elected officers of responsibilities.
5. To ensure that all voting procedures are correct and on time.
6. To act as the recorder in the absence of the Administrative Director.
7. To have authority, with approval from the Executive Officers and Director of Student Activities to amend the Senator requirements.
8. To act as liaison between the Faculty, Administration, and Board of Directors, and the S.G.A., including acting as major spokesperson for S.G.A. concerns at meetings of the said groups.

F. Duties and Powers of the Director of Communications shall be:

1. To serve as recording and corresponding secretary for the Executive Board and the Senate.
2. To type, post, and distribute the agenda and accurate minutes of all Senate meetings to Senate members, the Dean of Students, and the President of the College.
3. To maintain files of all S.G.A. minutes and agendas.
4. To issue press releases for S.G.A. sponsored events.
5. To ensure proper communication with the Circuit, Raven, and the Benedictine College yearbook, so that the S.G.A. is properly recognized and publicized. This is to include coverage of all S.G.A. sponsored events.
6. To oversee all Student Government social media sites.

G. Duties and Powers of the Director of Clubs shall be:

1. To receive new applications for club status, and to chair and organize all S.G.A. club meetings
2. To maintain files of all club applications, constitutions, and by-laws; including a current list of active clubs and their respective officers.
3. To organize all campus club fairs.
4. To meet with club S.G.A. representatives or club leaders once per semester.
5. To report club service hours once every quarter to the service learning coordinator.
6. To provide club information to the Circuit, Benedictine College yearbook, and other academic publications.
7. To present additional funding requests of student clubs/programs/events.

H. Duties and Powers of the Treasurer shall be:

1. To submit an annually prepared budget to the Senate.
2. To keep a record of all financial transactions of S.G.A.
3. To present financial reports, a monthly expense sheet, and an updated budget statement for any S.G.A. member upon request.
4. To request checks to fulfill S.G.A. monetary obligations.
5. To meet weekly with the Student Activities Director to review all S.G.A. financial transactions and to fulfill S.G.A. monetary obligations.
6. To maintain a financial record of the year in order to present it to the Student Body President and the Student Activities Director at the beginning of the spring term finals.
7. To present the Senate with a general explanation and report of S.G.A. finances regularly throughout the academic year.

I. Duties and Powers of the Senators shall be:

1. To assume delegated responsibilities from the Student Body President or Senate.
2. To consult with and inform their class constituency of matters in the Senate.
3. To vote on Senate proposals in accordance with the desires of their constituency and in accordance with the mission of the college.
4. To serve on standing and ad hoc S.G.A. committees.
5. To attend all major S.G.A. functions. If a Senator cannot attend he or she must be excused by the Student Body President or Student Body Vice President.

J. Voting Members

1. Only those members elected to the Senate shall be considered eligible to vote.
2. The Student Body President is only eligible to vote to break a tie.
3. The members of the Executive Board shall not have voting power in Senate meetings.

K. Regarding Bills

1. A bill shall be defined as: A formal written statement of a decision or expression of opinion put before or adopted by the Benedictine College Student Government Association.
2. Bills must be submitted in writing before they can be voted upon or taken into consideration by S.G.A.
3. After bills are submitted for consideration they can be amended before they are passed. Amendments to bills shall take effect after a favorable majority of two-thirds (2/3) is reached by the Senate.
4. The passage of bills shall occur by a simple majority of the Senate.
5. Regardless of whether or not a bill is passed a copy of it shall be placed in the minutes for the meeting at which it was considered.

II. Committees

A. The Senate shall have four standing committees consisting of a committee head, secretary, and marketing liaison in addition to other committee membership.

1. The four standing committees shall be Campus Development Committee, Communications Committee, Raven Unity Committee, and the Dining Services Committee.

B. The President may form additional committees to address the needs and concerns of the student body and the Student Government Association with Senate approval by a simple majority vote.

C. These committees will be formed with members of the Senate.

D. Committees will meet outside of Senate meetings at least once every other week.

E. The Executive Board, at the equal direction of the Student Body President and Student Body Vice President, shall appoint the chairs of each committee of the S.G.A. Appointments must be confirmed by a simple majority of the Executive board. Said chairs shall be required to report at each Senate meeting.

III. Elections and Appointments

A. Eligibility

1. For Members of S.G.A.:
  - a) Shall be a student at Benedictine College.
  - b) Shall have at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average. The Director of Student Activities will have the option to review all Senate members' grades at semester through the Student Affairs office.
  - c) Shall be ineligible if they plan to leave the college for any reason before their term of office is complete.
    - (1) A full term consists of September to April for Freshman, or April to April for upperclassmen. A half term consists of September to December for Freshman, April to December for upperclassmen, or January to April for upperclassmen and transfer.

(2) In the case of a student who has previously served on Senate for at least one half-term and intends to study abroad during the Spring semester of the next Senate term, the Executive Board may vote by a simple majority to grant an exemption to run for that Senate term for the good of S.G.A.

d) Any student on disciplinary probation must receive permission from the President and Dean of Students to be eligible to hold a Senate position.

## 2. For Executive Board Officers:

a) Student Body President and Student Body Vice President: Any student wishing to run for this position must be of at least sophomore social standing at the time they are sworn in and have at least one full-term of Senate experience.

b) Director of Communications, Director of Clubs, and Treasurer: Any student wishing to run for this position must have at least two of the three following qualifications:

(1) Be of at least sophomore social standing at the time they are sworn in.

(2) Have at least one half-term of Senate experience.

(3) A petition of one-eighth (1/8) of the student body.

c) All Executive Board members must live on campus, even if off-campus living is allowed. This policy is subject to change upon decision of S.G.A. Executive Officers, Director of Student Activities, and the Vice President of Student Affairs.

d) Executive Board officers may not hold a steady job outside of school, while school is in session as long as they are compensated for their work on the Executive Board, unless they have received approval from the Director of Student Activities.

e) Students wishing to run for an Executive Board position must be able to fill their position for the entire school year. Any student who anticipates to not be present for a semester during the school year term to which they are elected are not allowed to seek election for any Executive Board position.

## B. Procedure for Elections

### 1. Executive Board Officer Elections

a) Elections for the offices of Student Body President, Student Body Vice President, Director of Communications, Director of Clubs, and Treasurer shall be the responsibility of the Executive Board.

b) S.G.A. Executive Board members shall be elected into office no later than the end of March. The Student Body Vice President will conduct elections and part of the process will include the conduction of public speeches. (If said vice president is running for re-election, the Executive Board will appoint another member of the Executive Board to run the process unless all members of the Executive Board are running for re-election in which case the Executive Board shall select another member(s) of S.G.A. to run the election).

c) The student body at large shall, by direct election, vote for one candidate for each office.

d) The candidate for each office who receives a plurality of votes cast in said election shall be declared the winner.

e) The period between the election and the assumption of office is a training period for those newly elected officers. The winning candidates shall assume office no less than two weeks before the end of the spring semester and will meet with the newly elected senators.

f) In the event of a tie in an election for an Executive board Officer, a run-off election will be held within one week of the original election.

g) Candidates not on the ballots at the time of elections will not be considered (no write-ins shall be allowed).

## 2. Senator Elections

- a) Senate Elections shall be the responsibility of the Executive Board and shall take place shortly following the elections of S.G.A. Executive Board members. Senators shall be elected at large within their own social standing classes. Each class shall have four senators. The senior class shall also represent any undergraduate student that has exceeded the normal social senior class (hereby designated super seniors).
- b) In order to run for a Senate position, candidates must give a speech. Guidelines for speeches will be up to the discretion of the Executive Board.
- c) In case of a tie, the Executive Board shall vote by a simple majority to break the tie.
  - (1) In the case of a tie within the Executive Board, the Student Body President shall break the tie.
- d) Candidates not on the ballots at the time of elections will not be considered (no write-ins will be allowed).

## 3. Freshman Class Senators:

- a) The freshmen class senators shall be elected within the first six weeks of the new school year.
- b) This election is the responsibility of the Student Body Vice President.
- c) Candidates for positions must give a speech with guidelines that are up to the discretion of the Executive Board.
- d) Candidates not on the ballots at the time of elections will not be considered (no write-ins will be allowed).

## C. Removals

1. Any person holding an Executive Board or Senate office shall be automatically removed from the said office if he or she is placed on academic probation.
2. Any person holding an Executive Board or Senate office shall be subject to removal from the said office if:
  - a) He or she has accumulated three unexcused absences from the Senate meetings.
    - (1) The Student Body President reserves the right to determine whether an absence from a Senate meeting is excused or unexcused.
    - (2) Two tardies will constitute one unexcused absence from a Senate meeting; arriving ten minutes after the start of the meeting is considered a tardy.
    - (3) Two unexcused absences from committee meetings will constitute an unexcused absence from a Senate meeting; the Student Body President will determine if an absence is excused or unexcused.
  - b) He or she is placed on disciplinary probation, pending a review by the Dean of Student Affairs.
  - c) He or she is determined to be incapable of performing the duties of office. This includes work on his or her assigned committee(s).
  - d) He or she has behaved in such a way that has jeopardized the integrity of the office that he or she holds as laid out in the work agreement signed by the senator at the beginning of their term.
3. Procedure for the Subjective Removal of an S.G.A. Senator
  - a) A motion must be made or filed by a current S.G.A. Senator, before or during an all-Senate meeting.
  - b) The motion must be ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) vote by secret ballot by the Senate.
  - c) Unless the Executive Board votes unanimously to remove the Senator in question.



#### 4. Procedure for the Subjective Removal of an Executive Board Member

a) A motion must be made or filed by a current S.G.A. Senator, before or during an all-Senate meeting.

b) The motion must be ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) vote by secret ballot by the Senate.

#### D. Vacancies

##### 1. Permanent Vacancies

###### a) Executive Board

(1) In the event that a vacancy exists in an Executive Board position, the remaining members of the Executive Board will appoint a person to fill that position.

(2) This person appointed must provide his/her consent through a signature.

(3) Once they have provided their consent, their appointment must either be ratified or rejected by a simple majority vote of the Senate.

(4) Once this appointment is made, it must be confirmed by the Director of Student Activities and the Dean of Students.

###### b) Senator

(1) Any vacant Senator position will be filled through an Executive Board and Senate nomination.

(a) After the vacancy is confirmed, the Executive Board shall distribute intent-to-run forms and advertise the vacancy to the student body.

(b) Candidates must be of the same social standing as the vacant Senate seat. In the event that no such candidate exists, the special election will then be open to the rest of the Student Body.

(c) At the next possible all-Senate meeting, any candidate may present their case as to why they wish to be elected.

(d) Once all of the candidates have self-advocated, the Senate will debate and vote. A plurality is all that is required for a candidate to win the position.

(e) In the event there are multiple vacancies open at the same time for the same position, each Senator will get as many votes as there are vacancies. (For example, if there are four vacancies, each Senator gets four votes, etc.).

(2) The Executive Board may call for a special election to fill the position, if it deems it necessary.

#### IV. Budget and Funding

##### A. Club Funding and Additional Funding Requests

1. Additional funds may not be requested by or allocated for student groups that are not registered and approved as official student clubs/organizations of the Benedictine College Student Government Association. However, if all three of the following conditions are met, funds may then be requested and allocated for the unaffiliated student group, program, or event.

a) The student group/program/event must be co-hosted by SGA and SGA must take an active role in the facilitation and coordination of the student group/program/event.

b) The student group/program/event must uphold the mission of SGA and values of Benedictine College.

c) A mutually beneficial contract must be drafted and approved by a majority vote of the Senate.

(1) This rare exception to the policy should be used with great discretion. The Senate must seek the counsel of the Executive Treasurer and Executive Director of Clubs in such cases.

## B. Annual Budget

1. The Senate must approve an annual budget for the following year before the last all-Senate meeting of their term. The proposed budget must include:

- a) Estimated total funds for the following school year.
- b) Allocated funds towards the Senate, Executive Board, and each committee.
- c) Discretionary budget for the Executive Board.

## C. Discretionary Budget for Committees

1. A proposed discretionary budget must be created, presented, and approved by the Senate. The proposed discretionary budget for committees must:

- a) Be presented by the third all-Senate meeting.
- b) Include committee events.