

# General Bylaws of the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Body Government

*It shall be the purpose of these following bylaws to further explain and define the Student Body Constitution and the roles and duties of the offices within the Student Government Association of Virginia Commonwealth University, hereinafter referred to as the SGA. These bylaws may only be changed by a two-thirds vote from the two Senates with quorum being present. Never shall these bylaws supersede the Constitution of the Student Body of Virginia Commonwealth University.*

## **Article I. Membership**

As stated in Article I, Section 2 of the Student Body Constitution, “all students registered for one or more academic credits on the Richmond, VA Campuses of Virginia Commonwealth University shall be members of the Student Body.”

## **Article II. SGA Leadership**

### **Section 1. The Cabinet**

- A. The SGA Cabinet shall be responsible for setting the general direction of the organization.
- B. The membership of this committee shall be the President, Vice President of Undergraduates, Vice President of Graduate and Professional Students, Treasurer, Chief of Staff, Communications Chair, Appropriations Chair, Chief Justice, and Deputy Chief Justice.
- C. The Cabinet shall have the following powers:
  - a. To approve the SGA budget for submission to the Appropriations Committee.
  - b. To appoint representative to the Compensation and Evaluation Committee and approve its recommendations for SGA pay for the following year.

### **Section 2. SGA Leadership Board**

- A. The purpose of this organization is to create unity and facilitate communication of the branches to help set the direction of the SGA.
- B. The membership of this committee shall be the Cabinet, the Chairs of each Senate, and the Secretaries of each Senate, and can be expanded at the discretion of the President of the Student Body.
- C. The Leadership Board shall have the power to advise the Cabinet, Judicial Board, and Senate Chairs on matters before the Senate body meeting.

- D. The President of the SGA is the chair of the Leadership Board. In the President's absence, the President shall defer to either Vice President.
- E. The Leadership Board meetings shall be an opportunity to recommend items to the respective Senate Chairs to be placed on the agenda for each Senate's meetings.
- F. If there is a dispute between amended agenda items, the SGA Leadership members can vote to amend the Senate agendas before each Senate's meetings.
- G. The Cabinet must review the SGA operational budget prior to submission to the Leadership Board.
- H. The SGA Leadership Board shall meet at least every other week, excluding breaks. They shall meet no less than once each month during the months of May, June, July, and August to continue the business of the SGA during the summer session.
- I. Any member of the Leadership Board may call for a special meeting of the Leadership to consider issues before the SGA.

### **Article III. The Executive**

#### **Section 1. Structure**

- A. The Executive Branch is designed to allow the President of the Student Body to be the spokesperson for the SGA. The President is seen as the figurehead of the SGA; they shall act as a liaison between the SGA, the Student Body, the University, and the general community. The President shall be assisted by the Vice Presidents, the Chief of Staff, the Treasurer, and the Communications Chair. The Chief of Staff, the Treasurer, the Communications Chair, and the Appropriations Chair shall be appointed by the elected President, elected Vice Presidents, and the Election Committee via an application process.
- B. The members of the Executive Branch shall be expected to keep certain minimum requirements. These requirements include not being on academic probation or academic warning; not holding more than one membership position as defined in Article I of these General Bylaws; and maintaining good academic standing.
- C. Failure of members of the Executive Branch to fulfill the requirements set forth above will be automatically removed from their office by the President with concurrence of the Chief Justice.
- D. Should the President be unable to fulfill their duties, the Cabinet shall vote on which Vice President shall assume the responsibilities of the President until the President regains the abilities to fulfill their duties or until the date of the next Presidential election. If neither Vice President is able to assume the responsibilities of the President, then the Cabinet shall vote on which Chair of the Senates shall assume the role as President until either the President or one of the Vice Presidents regains the ability to fulfill their duties or until the date of the next Presidential election.

#### **Section 2. Elected Executive Officers**

- A. The President
  - a. The President of the Student Body shall have the following powers and duties:

- i. The President shall hold all powers set forth in Article III, Section 3, of the Constitution.
  - ii. The President shall set forth an agenda for the SGA and present it in some form to the Student Body.
  - iii. The President may serve or appoint, with approval of both Senates, any member of the Student Body to any other University committee they deem necessary. A University committee is any body formed by a non-SGA body for non-SGA purposes.
  - iv. The President may nominate and, with approval of the Vice Presidents and Election Committee, appoint members of the Student Body to offices in accordance.
  - v. The President may nominate Senators to be Committee Chairs.
  - vi. The President shall provide information on new officers to the Division of Student Affairs.
  - vii. The President shall sign or veto all legislation (both bills and resolutions).
  - viii. The President, with the consent of each Senate's leadership, may create special committees of the SGA.
  - ix. The President shall meet at least once per semester with the President of the University, the Provost of the University, and if necessary, the Vice Provosts.
- b. The President shall set aside a minimum of six (6) hours a week for office hours.
  - c. The Cabinet and the Leadership Board shall meet at the discretion of the President.
- B. The Vice Presidents
- a. The Vice Presidents shall have the following powers and duties:
    - i. The Vice President of Undergraduate Students shall preside over the Undergraduate Senate as President of the Senate, and the Vice President of Graduate and Professional Students shall preside over the Graduate and Professional Student Senate as President of the Senate.
    - ii. Each Vice President shall be a voting student representative on the University Council.
    - iii. The Vice President of Undergraduate Students shall serve as the liaison between the SGA and the Faculty Senate, and the Vice President of Graduate and Professional Students shall serve as the liaison between the SGA and the Staff Senate. They shall report to the President and to the Senate on the actions of all Faculty and Staff Senate meetings.
    - iv. The Vice President of Graduate and Professional Students shall oversee the execution of the VCU Wellness Block Party, which may be headed by the Wellness Block Party Chair.
    - v. The Vice President shall aid each Senate's Membership Committee Chair, at the Chair's request, with reaching full representation on University-wide committees.

- vi. The Vice President shall meet with University Committee representatives to discuss and report the actions of these committees to the Undergraduate Senate and the President of the Student Body.
- vii. The Vice President shall set aside a minimum of six (6) hours a week for office hours.

**Section 3. Appointed Officers.**

**A. The Chief of Staff**

- a. The Chief of Staff shall be responsible for attending every session of the Leadership Board and Executive Branch and shall have the following powers and duties:
  - i. The Chief of Staff must coordinate with the Secretary of each Senate to maintain minutes are kept and attendance recorded.
  - ii. The Chief of Staff shall keep the minutes of all Leadership and Executive Branch meetings and any other meeting the President of the Student Body deems necessary. The minutes for every meeting should posted no later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the meeting.
  - iii. The Chief of Staff shall maintain attendance records of both Senates and its committees and maintain the records on the official SGA electronic medium with the help of each Senate's Secretary. These records shall be up-to-date and accurate at all times; otherwise, the Chief of Staff shall be eligible for removal from office by the President.
  - iv. The Chief of Staff shall serve as the representative of the SGA in all matters pertaining to the offices.
  - v. The Chief of Staff shall be responsible for the maintenance, cleanliness and general management of the offices.
  - vi. The Chief of Staff shall serve as the liaison to the office of Student Leadership and Involvement Center. This includes updating office access key lists.
  - vii. The Chief of Staff shall notify the Chairperson of each Senate's Membership Committee should any vacancies arise within either Senate.
  - viii. The Chief of Staff shall maintain each Senate's roster and manage all SGA electronic lists with the help of each Senate's Secretary.
  - ix. The Chief of Staff shall have the Secretary of each Senate announce in their weekly report any senator who is delinquent in their attendance and provide appropriate warning prior to removal. Upon exceeding the limits set above, the Chief of Staff will notify the delinquent senator of their removal.

**B. The Treasurer**

- a. The Treasurer shall have the following powers and duties:
  - i. The Treasurer shall be the sole controller of the budget of the SGA.

- ii. The Treasurer shall, after receiving requests from each area of the SGA, submit one totaled budget to the to the Cabinet for review and approval before presenting the final recommended budget to the Appropriations Committee at a time deemed proper by that committee.
- iii. The Treasurer must complete all appropriate financial training as required by the SGA and the university.
- iv. In the event that the Treasurer is unable to fulfill their duties, the Chief of Staff shall serve as the Treasurer until they regain the ability to fulfill the duties of the Treasurer. If the Treasurer is not able to return to their duties, the President shall appoint a new Treasurer under Article III, Section 3 of the Constitution.
- v. The Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining records of all financial paperwork and affairs.
- vi. The Treasurer must attend all Appropriations Committee meetings.

C. The Communications Chair

- a. The Communications Chair shall serve all areas of the SGA and shall have the following powers and duties:
  - i. The Communications Chair will oversee all public relations for the SGA.
  - ii. The Communications Chair shall be the primary contact for all media outlet inquiries and requests.
  - iii. The Communications Chair shall maintain the SGA website and be the liaison to the Division of Student Affairs webmaster.
  - iv. The Communications Chair shall maintain an active social and digital media presence for the SGA.
  - v. The Communications Chair shall be the liaison to the Information and Technology Department.
  - vi. The Communications Chair will attend all Community Engagement committee meetings.

D. The Appropriations Chair

- a. The Appropriations Chair and shall have the following powers and duties:
  - i. The Appropriations Chair shall be the head of the Appropriations Committee and oversees the allocation of the Student Activities Fee to University-affiliated student organizations.
  - ii. The Appropriations Chair must complete all appropriate financial training as required by the SGA and the University.
  - iii. In the event that the Appropriations Chair is unable to fulfill their duties, the Secretary of the Appropriations Committee shall serve as the Appropriations Chair until they regain the ability to fulfill the duties of the Appropriations Chair. If the Appropriations Chair is not able to return to their duties, the President shall appoint a new Appropriations Chair under Article III, Section 3 of the Constitution.

- iv. The Appropriations Chair shall be responsible for maintaining records of all financial paperwork and affairs pertaining to student organizations.
- E. The Secretary for each Senate may be appointed.
- F. The Chair of the VCU Wellness Block Party may be appointed.

#### **Section 4. Executive Meetings**

- A. The Executive Staff shall meet at the discretion of the President.
- B. Any member of the Leadership Board may call for a special meeting of the Leadership to consider issues before the SGA.

### **Article IV. The Legislative Branch**

#### **Section 1. Structure**

- A. The Legislative Branch is composed of two Senates: the Undergraduate Senate and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate.
- B. Each Senate is designed to represent the Student Body in terms of Undergraduates and Graduate and Professional Students. Senators will be elected from the Student Body.

#### **Section 2. Bills and Resolutions**

##### The Designation of Bills and Resolutions

- A. Bills
  - a. Bills are prefixed with S.B. (for Senate Bill) and they are followed by a number based on the order in which they are introduced. SGA bills pertain to programs, offices and funding specifically controlled by the SGA and for which the SGA is solely responsible.
  - b. Bills acted upon by the Senate must be submitted to the SGA President.
- B. Resolutions
  - a. Resolutions are designated S.R. (for Senate Resolution) followed by a number (S.R. 01) in the order in which they were introduced. A resolution addresses matters entirely within the prerogative of the Senate, such as revising the standing rules. Resolutions are also used to express the sentiments of a Senate and the SGA, such as offering a position on a matter of University concern, offering condolences to the family of a deceased member of the campus community, or it may give “advice” other executive business.
  - b. Resolutions also require the approval of the President.

#### **Section 3. Senators**

- A. Senators of the SGA shall be expected to keep certain minimum requirements. They are as follows:
  - a. Senators are expected to maintain their good academic standing while a member of SGA.
  - b. Senators are expected to abide by the VCU SGA Senator Creed.

- c. First year and transfers students with no grade point average on record with Virginia Commonwealth University may be Senators so long as the grade point average they receive during their first semester at Virginia Commonwealth University meets the requirements aforementioned.
  - d. Failure of Senators to fulfill the requirements of these Bylaws may be removed from office by the Chair of Senate.
- B. A Senator has the following responsibilities:
- a. A senator should seek out the opinions of their electorate; make decisions and vote on matters brought before their respective Senate according to their own reasoned judgment and keeping in mind their constituents; act with sensitivity to and respect for the needs and wants of the Student Body and University community; research and present ideas or concepts to their committee as delegated by the committee chairperson; and finally develop and propose ideas, interests, and concerns to their respective Senate. In addition, they should report and disseminate information to their class, school, and/or program when necessary.
  - b. Each semester all senators are encouraged to sign up for and complete one (1) hour of work per academic week within the SGA Offices during normal business hours defined as 9am through 6pm, Monday through Friday during the regular semester.
  - c. Keep the SGA Offices in an orderly state.
  - d. Aid in the promotion and fulfillment of SGA organized and sponsored events.
  - e. If part of a committee, senators must make a majority of committee meetings.
- C. Attendance Policy:
- a. Attendance is defined as being present for a majority of any meeting.
  - b. Senators may miss a maximum of two (2) Senate meetings per semester.
  - c. If a Senator is absent at a meeting, they may vote on a bill or resolution by proxy.
  - d. The Chief of Staff shall send out weekly, private communications to any Senator who is delinquent in their attendance and provide appropriate warning prior to removal.
  - e. Upon exceeding the limits set above, the Chief of Staff will notify the delinquent Senator of their removal.
  - f. The Leadership of the Senate will have the ability to deem major SGA events mandatory. Senators shall be required to attend at least one of these events during the course of one (1) semester.

#### **Section 4. Election of Senate Officers**

- A. Senate officer election shall begin during the first Senate meeting immediately following the spring election. Both Senates shall hold elections to fill the positions of the Senate Chair and Committee Chairpersons.
- B. The President, Vice Presidents, and Election Committee may appoint a Secretary to each Senate. Otherwise, the Secretary may be elected from each Senate.
- C. Nomination and Election process

- a. Nomination for all positions will be accepted at the first meeting immediately following spring elections and election of officers will occur as specified in each Senate's respective Bylaws.
- b. Each position shall be voted on by the Senate using a ballot system. The tally and winner of each election shall be announced prior to the voting for the next position.
- D. Qualifications for Committee Chairs
  - a. The President of the Student Body or any Senator may nominate a Senator to be the Chairperson of a committee.
  - b. For a Senator to be nominated as Chairperson of a Committee, they must first have completed at least one (1) semester of experience in that committee as an active senator prior to the nomination.
- E. Should a vacancy occur in any of the Committee Chair positions due to resignation, graduation, or removal from office, the position is to be filled in the Senate session following the vacancy.
- F. Any internal elections held by Legislative remains unofficial until a member of the Judiciary committee certifies the election results.

### **Section 5. Meetings**

- A. The Undergraduate Senate shall meet at least twice monthly during the fall and spring semesters, not including breaks.
- B. The Graduate and Professional Student Senate shall meet at least monthly during the fall and spring semesters, not including breaks.
- C. Special meetings of either Senate shall be called at the discretion of the Chair or President of the Student Body when deemed necessary for the business of the organization.

### **Section 6. Joint Committees**

- A. The Legislative shall have three permanent Joint Committees between the two Senates: the Appropriations Committee, the Joint Matters Committee, and the Elections Committee.
- B. All Joint Committees must draft or revise and approve guidelines for submission no less than once annually to both Senates for approval no later than the third Senate meeting of fall semester.
- C. The Chairs of the Undergraduate Senate and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate shall appoint co-chairs to head the Joint Matters Committee and the Elections Committee.
- D. The Appropriations Committee shall be headed by the Appropriations Chair who is appointed by the President, Vice Presidents, and Elections Committee.
- E. The Joint Matters Committee:
  - a. Must convene monthly to discuss matters pertaining to all students at VCU (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) and suggest resolutions or bills for these matters.

- F. The Elections Committee:
  - a. Must convene in the spring semester to oversee the election of the President and Vice Presidents.
  - b. Must assist the President and Vice Presidents in selecting their Cabinet via vote.
- G. Appropriations Committee
  - a. The Committee shall consist of nine members: The Treasurer; the Appropriations Chair; and seven other members. The eight members aside from the Treasurer must be composed of two undergraduate Senators; two graduate or professional student Senators, one of whom must come from the Schools of Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, or Pharmacy; two undergraduate delegates; and two graduate or professional delegates. These members are appointed by an application process overseen by the President, Vice Presidents, and Election Committee.
  - b. The Treasurer is a nonvoting member of the Committee unless there is a tie.
  - c. The Committee shall be headed by the Appropriations Chair.

### **Section 7. Special Programs**

- A. The VCU SGA recognizes several annual programs that occur under the VCU SGA's Supervision. These programs include the VCU Qatar Leadership Program and the accompanying VCU Qatar Day and the VCU Wellness Block Party.
- B. VCU Qatar Leadership Exchange Program
  - a. The SGA recognizes the purpose of this program as such: Increasing appreciation, awareness, and collaboration between VCU's Richmond and Qatar campuses; promoting communication, partnership, and leadership development between the Student Governments Associations on both campuses; increasing students' understanding of Qatari and United States culture and customs; providing a high-impact, study abroad experience that is open to all VCU students regardless of their ability to afford it financially; enhancing students' leadership development in order to support VCU's Quest For Distinction and the Qatar 2030 National Vision goals and strategies.
  - b. The SGA expects the following outcomes from being part of program planning alongside the Division of Student Affairs: Demonstrating an increased awareness of Islamic and U.S. culture; recognizing the similarities and differences between VCU students' experience in Richmond, VA and Doha, Qatar contexts; and comparing and contrasting leadership in the United States and Qatar.
  - c. Annually, the SGA will reserve six student spaces on the program to send to the Doha campus.
  - d. The SGA will maintain funding and control of VCU Qatar Day.
- C. The VCU Wellness Block Party
  - a. The Wellness Block Party is a concentrated effort by the SGA to provide a health and wellness event for the community outside of just VCU. The event should foster collaboration among schools, departments, and campuses.

- b. The Block Party Chair shall be appointed by the President, Vice Presidents, and Election Committee.
- c. The Vice President of Graduate and Professional Students shall specifically oversee the Block Party Chair and their execution of the block party.

## Article V. The Senates

### Section 1. Structure

- A. The SGA Legislative Body is composed of the Undergraduate Senate and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate. Both Senates are designed to represent their respective part of the Student Body.
- B. The Undergraduate Senate shall consist of thirty (30) Senators from the Undergraduate Student Body and shall meet at least every other week during the fall and spring semesters, not including breaks. Special meetings of the Senate shall be called at the discretion of the Chair when deemed necessary for the business of the organization.
- C. The Graduate and Professional Student Senate is designed to represent the Graduate and Professional Students of the Student Body. It shall consist of thirty (30) Senators from the Student Body.
  - a. The voting members of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate shall be composed as follows:
    - i. The School of Allied Health Professions shall have three Senators each filled by professional students.
    - ii. The School of Dentistry shall have four Senators each filled by professional students.
    - iii. The School of Medicine shall have four Senators each filled by professional students.
    - iv. The School of Nursing shall have three Senators each filled by professional students.
    - v. The School of Pharmacy shall have four Senators each filled by professional students.
    - vi. Nine (9) Senators shall be graduate students from university-wide programs not specified above.
    - vii. The School of Allied Health Professions shall have two additional Senators to represent Clinical and Laboratory Sciences and Radiation Sciences students.
    - viii. The School of Dentistry shall have one additional Senator to represent Dental Hygiene students.
  - b. Senators must be elected internally from within their respective school or program.
  - c. Graduate and professional senators shall be installed in the fall of the new academic year, though they may be elected in the spring.

**Section 2. Elected Senate Officers**

- A. The Senate may nominate its Chair and Committee Chairpersons from within the Senate at a Senate meeting.
  - 1. The Graduate and Professional Student Senate may may nominate these officers at a meeting held a minimum of four (4) weeks prior to the day on which internal senate elections will be held. Nominations will not be accepted after a period beginning ten (10) business days prior to the day on which the election will be held.
- B. Elections should be held on the second to last Senate meeting of the spring following the election of the President of the Student Body and Vice Presidents or at the first fall meeting of the Senate if time does not permit.
- C. The election of the Chair shall take place first. The election of the committee chairpersons shall follow and take place in alphabetical order by Committee.
- D. Qualifications for Officers:
  - 1. The President of the Student Body or any Senator, including their self, may nominate a Senator to be the Chair or chairperson of a committee.
  - 2. For a Senator to be nominated as Chair, they must first have completed at least one (1) semester of experience in a committee or Senate.
- E. Should a vacancy occur in any of the positions due to resignation, graduation, or removal from office, the position is to be filled in the Senate session following the vacancy.
- F. Any internal elections held by the Senate remains unofficial until a member of the Judiciary Committee certifies the election results.
- G. The Chair of Senate
  - a. The Chair shall serve as the leader of the Senate and shall collaborate with the President of SGA, and both of the Vice Presidents, to maintain order, and the Chair shall run the Undergraduate Senate sessions, set the agenda for each session of the Senate. They shall also assign bills and resolutions to the appropriate Senate Committees.
  - b. The Chair shall, in coordination with the Secretary of the Undergraduate Senate, establish Senate Guidelines which shall only take effect with the majority approval of the Senate Committee Chairpersons.
  - c. It shall be the responsibility of the Chair to set forth an example and precedent for which the members of the Senate should follow.
  - d. Should the Chair be unable to fulfill their duties, the Vice President of Undergraduates shall assume the role as Chair until the next session of the Senate. Should both the Chair and Vice President be unable to fulfill their duties, the Senate shall elect a temporary leader to assume the role as Chair until the next session of the Senate. Should the Chair be unable to regain the ability to fulfill their duties, the Senate shall elect a new Chair.
- B. The Secretary of Senate
  - a. The Secretary shall be responsible for recording minutes and attendance.
  - b. The Secretary shall work alongside the Chief of Staff.

- c. The Secretary may be appointed by the President, Vice Presidents, and Election Committee.
- C. The Chairpersons of Committees
  - a. The Chairpersons head the Senate committees.
  - b. The Chairpersons report to the Chair of Senate.

### Section 3. The Committees

- A. Structure
  - a. There shall be four (4) Standing Committees within the Undergraduate Senate: The Academic Affairs Committee, the Membership Committee, Student Life Committee, and the Community Engagement Committee.
  - b. There shall be three (3) Standing Committees within the Graduate and Professional Student Senate: The Membership Committee, the Student Life Committee, and the Community Engagement Committee.
  - c. These committees shall consist of Senators, Delegates, and, in some cases, outside members of the Student Body. There shall be no maximum number of members for any committee of the Senate, but there shall be a minimum number of four (4) senators, not including the Chair, for each standing committee given there is a full Senate; with the exception of the Membership Committee. Each committee shall be responsible for a regular committee update which is to be presented during each Senate session.
  - d. The Senate may, when it is found necessary, establish Special Committees; these Special Committees shall only be officially recognized when legislation has been put forward to create such a Committee and this legislation is approved with a majority vote from the present Senate members. The roles and responsibilities of these Special Committees shall be provided with such legislature. All Special Committees must have within their creation a time in which the committee will be dissolved.
  - e. All Committees (Standing, Special, and Joint) shall have responsibilities that include:
    - 1. Preparing an agenda and keeping minutes.
    - 2. Posting the minutes on an approved SGA online medium.
    - 3. Making a regular report to Senate.
    - 4. A process for establishing the committee Vice Chair and committee Clerk.
    - 5. Each committee shall draft or revise and approve guidelines for submission no less than once annually to the Senate for approval no later than the third Senate meeting of fall semester.
- B. All committee chairpersons shall have the power to appoint delegates to their Committee with the exception of the Membership Committee Chair. Having done so, the Chairperson is required to report their actions to the Secretary and the Membership Committee to verify that the appointee meets the qualifications set forth by the SGA.
- C. Committee chairpersons serve as the leader and spokesperson for their committee. They are responsible for delivering a report during each Senate session as to the progress the committee is making with its assigned legislation along with any projects or legislation

created by the committee. The Chairperson of a Senate committee may hold no other officer position within the SGA, and they must uphold their responsibilities as a senator.

#### **Section 4. The Senators**

- A. Responsibilities and criteria for Senators can be found in Article IV, Section 4 of these Bylaws.
- B. Undergraduate Senators are required to participate in a committee and keep one office hour each week. These requirements include the following responsibilities:
  - a. Attending and participating in weekly Senate sessions and Committee meetings.
  - b. Signing up for and completing one (1) hour of work per academic week within the SGA Offices during normal business hours defined as 9am through 6pm, Monday through Friday, during the regular semester.
  - c. Along with only being able to miss two (2) Senate meetings per semester, a Senator may not miss more than two office hours per semester. Attendance is kept on a semesterly basis by the Secretary and Chief of Staff.
- C. Failure of Senators to fulfill the requirements of these Bylaws may be removed from office by the Chair of Senate.

#### **Section 5. Election of Senate Officers**

- A. Senate officer elections shall begin during the first Senate meeting immediately following the spring election. Elections shall take place to fill positions of the Chair and Committee Chairpersons. (The Secretary may be appointed by the President, Vice Presidents, and Election Committee.)
- B. Nomination and Election process
  - a. Nomination for all positions will be accepted at the first meeting immediately following spring elections and election of officers will occur at the subsequent Senate meeting. The election of the Leadership and Membership Committee members shall take place in the following order: Chair and then Committee Chairpersons in alphabetical order by Committee. Each position shall be voted on by the Senate using a ballot system. The tally and winner of each election shall be announced prior to the voting for the next position.
  - b. Training and transitions shall begin immediately after the spring Senate Officer elections.
- C. Qualifications for Leadership of the Senate
  - a. Officers of the Senate: For a Senator to be nominated, they must be a current Senator and have completed at least one (1) semester of experience as an active Senator prior to the nomination. It is required that nominees for the position of Chair should have served as a Committee Chair for at least one full semester unless former chairpersons are not interested in the position.
  - b. Committee Chairpersons: The President of the Student Body or any Senator may nominate a Senator to be the Chairperson of a committee. For a Senator to be nominated as Chairperson of a Committee, they must first have completed at least one (1) semester of experience in that committee.

- c. Should a vacancy occur in any of the Senate Leadership positions due to resignation, graduation, or removal from office, the position is to be filled in the Senate session following the vacancy. Any internal elections held by Legislative remains unofficial until a member of the Judiciary committee certifies the election results.

### **Section 6. Voting**

- A. Each Senator is entitled to one vote on any bill, resolution, or other matter.
- B. A quorum, which consists of a simple majority of the voting members of the Senate, or 16 Senators, shall be present for conducting business.
- C. A motion to be carried must receive a simple majority of the votes cast.
- D. Routine business may be voted on by a show of hands.
- E. A roll call must be initiated if so requested by any Senator or Senate Officer.

### **Section 7: Roberts Rules of Order.**

The rules contained in ROBERTS' RULES OF ORDER, Revised, shall govern the Senate in all cases to which they are applicable and which they are not inconsistent with the rules of order of the VCU SGA.

## **Article VI. The Judiciary Committee**

### **Section 1. Structure**

- A. As stated in Article IV Section 1 of the Constitution, the Judiciary Committee shall consist of the Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice, and three (3) Associate Justices.
- B. The Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice, and the Associate Justices shall be nominated by the President based on an application and approved by a majority vote from each Senate of the members present. Members of the Judiciary Committee serve two-year appointments until they resign, leave Virginia Commonwealth University, are removed by the Chief Justice with a majority vote of approval from the Senate, or are impeached and convicted.
- C. Two Justices must be elected from the Graduate and Professional Student Senate. The remaining three Justices may be elected from the Undergraduate Senate.
- D. The Deputy Chief Justice must come from the opposing Senate from which the Chief Justice comes from unless there are no interested candidates.
- E. If a vacancy should arise, the President of the Student Body shall nominate for appointment a new Justice within fourteen (14) academic days; otherwise, the Chief Justice may nominate an appointment for the position.
- F. Neither the Chief Justice nor any Associate Justice may hold any other elected or appointed position within the SGA while holding their position on the Judiciary.
- G. The Chief Justice must issue a formal opinion within 72 hours of communicating with the President of the SGA, stating the legitimacy of all legislation that is questioned, including advisory statements, therein signed by the President of the SGA.

## Section 2. The Justices and Staff

### A. The Chief Justice

a. The Chief Justice shall have the following powers and duties:

i. The Chief Justice shall be the leader of the Judiciary Committee.

ii. The Chief Justice shall administer the oath of office to the President of the Student Body, the Vice President of Undergraduates, the Vice President of Graduate and Professional Students, and all Senators.

1. The Oath of Office read to the President shall, as defined in Article III, Section 2 of the Constitution, be as follows: *“I do solemnly affirm that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the Student Body, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Body.”*

2. The Oath of Office read to each Vice President shall be as follows: *“I do solemnly affirm that I will faithfully execute the office of Vice President of the Student Body, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Body.”*

3. The Oath of Office read to each Senate Officer shall be as follows: *“I do solemnly swear to uphold the Constitution and Bylaws of the Student Government Association of Virginia Commonwealth University and perform the duties of my office to the best of my knowledge and ability.”*

4. The Oath of Office read to all Senators shall be as follows: *“I do solemnly affirm that I will faithfully execute my duties as a Senator, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of Virginia Commonwealth University Student Body.”*

iii. The Chief Justice may, in their absence in Senate, delegate the task of swearing in new members to another justice.

iv. The Chief Justice should ensure that all standing, special, and joint committees having working bylaws according to the rules specified in these General Bylaws and including bylaws for the Appropriations Committee.

v. Should the Chief Justice be unable to fulfill their duties, the Deputy Chief Justice shall assume the role as Chief Justice until the Chief Justice is able to regain the ability to fulfill his or her duties.

vi. Should both the Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice be unable to fulfill their duties, the President shall appoint one of the three remaining Justices to assume the role of Chief Justice until either or both the Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice regain the to fulfill their duties.

B. The Deputy Chief Justice assists the Chief Justice whenever needed and shall oversee internal mediation proceedings.

C. The Chief Justice may not run for presidency if they alter the General Bylaws during their term without two-thirds approval of both Senates.

### **Section 3. Hearing Procedures**

- A. Judiciary Committee hearings shall consist of all parties being present during opening statements. Parties then will present all evidence and a comprehensive list of all witnesses that shall appear.
- B. In the event that a subpoenaed party fails to appear at their hearing, the Judiciary Committee reserves the right to move forward with the case.
- C. Before any hearing shall proceed, all parties and or witnesses shall be sworn in using the following oath: *“I affirm that all testimony and evidence presented shall be truthful and accurate. I am aware that I am bound by this University’s Rules and Procedures and that any knowingly false statements or testimony to this Court shall be considered a potential Rules and Procedures violation.”*
- D. Following opening statements, all witnesses will remain outside of the hearing chambers until called forth by the Judiciary Committee. Both sides will present their case including all evidence and witness statements. Both sides must submit a hard copy of their list to the Chief Justice prior to the hearing date.
- E. The Judiciary Committee will dismiss all parties and reconvene for deliberations. A decision will be issued and made available to all parties within fourteen (14) academic days. This decision will be published and the record kept in the offices of the Judiciary Committee for review by any and all parties.
- F. Hearings will be recorded to help with the judicial process.

### **Section 4. Representation**

- A. In the event that either the plaintiff or defendant should elect to have someone else represent them in their hearing, the following criteria must be met:
  - a. The appointed representative must currently be enrolled at Virginia Commonwealth University;
  - b. Both the individual requesting representation and the representative must be consenting; and
  - c. The Judiciary Committee must be notified of this change prior to the hearing.
  - d. The following disclaimer shall be signed and sent to the Judiciary Committee: *“I hereby give consent and authorize, on this date of [insert date], [said person] to represent me in Case [case number]. I grant all representation to [said person] for the duration of the case or until I official revoke these privileges. I understand that this person will act on my behalf and speak for me in all matters relating to the case. The outcome of the case may not be disputed based on representation.”*

### **Section 5. Filing for Judicial Interpretation**

- A. Judicial interpretation may be sought for the following reasons:
  - a. Any person(s) may file a case for the Judiciary Committee to determine the constitutionality and/or validity of any act of the Executive or Legislative or

Judicial or of any agency directly associated with the SGA within thirty (30) days of said action. All deliberations of the Judiciary Committee may be made at their own discretion; however, all final opinions and holdings must be made public and in writing.

- b. Any member of the Student Body may file a petition for judicial interpretation. Students seeking such remedy may arrange for SGA member representation in presenting their request to the Judiciary Committee. Should that individual be a member of the Judiciary Committee, that Justice must be recused from participating in the Hearing on that matter.
- B. All Judiciary Committee Hearings shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the Judiciary Committee Guidelines. All Judiciary Committee interpretations, rulings, and decisions shall be in writing and shall be made available to the Student Body. A permanent record of all hearings, rulings, interpretations, and decisions whether for Judicial Remedy or Judicial Appeal shall be kept in the SGA Office and online.
- C. Judicial remedy is initiated by submitting a brief outlining the facts of the question or complaint. The format of such a brief can be found on the SGA website.
- D. The Judiciary Committee shall review the submitted brief for merit applying the Rule of Two and, if appropriate, issue an injunction to halt all proceedings in dispute.
- E. Subpoenas shall be issued to all parties involved, if appropriate, and a hearing will be scheduled to establish the facts at a time agreeable to the parties.
- F. Should any party fail to appear at the hearing without the prior consent of the Judiciary Committee, the issue shall be resolved immediately by a summary judgment.
- G. Upon establishing the facts, the hearing will be concluded by referring the issue to the Judiciary Committee for deliberation and resolution.
- H. If because of a dispute, the facts cannot be established, the issue will be referred for a Judicial hearing.
- I. If any party wants to appeal the decision of the Judiciary Committee, they shall have five (5) business days to present (at an SGA Office or through official email) new evidence and/or extenuating circumstances. The Judiciary Committee will then determine the validity of the appeal.

### **Section 6. Judicial Injunctions**

- A. The Judiciary Committee shall place Judicial Injunctions to halt the actions of any person or group in order to preserve the status quo while a case is pending.
- B. There shall be two forms of Injunctions:
  - a. Provincial Injunctions can be placed by a majority vote of the Judiciary Committee and will be in place for the duration of the case.
  - b. Emergency Injunctions can be placed at the discretion of the Chief Justice and must be approved by the Judiciary Committee at the next scheduled meeting in order to become permanent. If not approved, the Emergency Injunction expires.

### **Section 7. Mediation**

- A. The Judiciary Committee shall act as mediator between student organizations in dispute regarding the validity of their actions under their authority as delegated by the University.
- B. Any member of the Student Body or student organization may notify the Judiciary Committee of a grievance or matter of dispute between themselves and another student organization within one calendar week of said action or point of dispute, unless the branch unanimously agrees to hear said dispute.
- C. Following notification and all proper completed paperwork within that time the Judiciary Committee shall notify all parties involved and schedule a meeting time for all parties to convene to discuss the dispute in question.
- D. The Judiciary Committee may only act as a mediator between consenting parties and those parties prior to mediation must agree that the decision of Judiciary Committee will be accepted and enforced prior to a hearing of grievances.
- E. Mediation hearings will follow the Structure and Procedure of the Judiciary Committee as outlined in our Guidelines under Hearing Procedures.
- F. The Judiciary Committee shall contact both organizations after the hearing to set up a thirty (30) day follow-up meeting if deemed necessary.

#### **Article VII. The Advisors**

##### **Section 1. Appointment and Authority of Advisors**

- A. The university shall appoint advisors to the SGA. SGA Advisors have the authority to attend any and all meetings of the SGA, have authority to call special mandatory meetings of committees or of the body as a whole for the purpose of training or development.
- B. SGA Advisors have the authority under these General Bylaws to attend any and all meetings of the SGA, public or private, and the authority to call special mandatory meetings of committees or of the body as a whole for the purpose of training, leadership development, or organizational development.

#### **Article VIII. Financial Management of the Organization**

##### **Section 1. Budget Authority**

- A. Authority of the Treasurer
  - a. The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer for the SGA. All financial transactions must be approved by the Treasurer or designee as appropriate prior to submission to the University for processing
  - b. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the annual budget process for the funds used to operate the SGA in accordance with Operational Budget Bylaws.
- B. Compensation and Evaluation Committee
  - a. The SGA will appoint a committee that will meet each spring to review current compensation and evaluation processes and recommend any changes for the following fiscal year.
  - b. A member of the Judicial Committee must chair the committee and the Treasurer must serve on that committee.
  - c. The current President of the Student Body may also serve on this committee.

**Section 2. Budget Management and Transparency**

- A. The SGA operational funds shall be managed by the University at all times. SGA shall not be permitted to have non-University accounts at any time. All finances of the SGA shall be made available to the general Student Body by way of the web pages and other means to ensure open records for SGA finances.

**Article IV. Elections and Appointments**

**Section 1. Structure**

- A. General Body elections and referenda shall occur using secure web-based processes managed by the University.
- B. Members of the Student Body are entitled to one vote in each general election or referendum.
- C. The name of each candidate, their school or college, and the position for which they are running shall appear together on the ballot.
- D. Only the name given to the University by the candidate shall be used on the ballot. Nicknames shall not be permitted unless documentation is provided to show that this is a candidate's most common name.

**Section 2. Results**

- A. The unofficial results of the election will be posted on the SGA website no later than two business days after the close of the election.
- B. The official results of the election will be posted on the SGA website as soon as they have been confirmed by the Judiciary Committee. If there is contention of the election, then the results will be withheld until grievances have been resolved.
- C. The official results of the elections will be released no later than five (5) business days after the election unless a problem with verification arises.

**Section 3. Schedule of Elections**

- A. External elections shall occur once per academic year. The election dates shall be set to occur at a time period before Spring Break. The dates shall be approved by the Elections Committee Co-chairs.
- B. Spring External Election
  - a. The election will consist of the President of the Student Body and the Vice Presidents of the Student Body.
  - b. A separate election may be held for Senate seats.
  - c. Senators shall serve from the beginning of the summer semester until the end of the following spring semester. The President and Vice Presidents of the Student Body shall serve from the beginning of the summer semester until the end of the spring semester.
  - d. Any amendments to the Constitution by the SGA or other referendum shall be placed on the ballot at this time for the Student Body to vote on.

- e. Senators shall be sworn in at the last session of the current term. Any sworn in senator who does not complete training within two (2) calendar weeks of the first meeting of each semester shall be automatically removed until training is complete. The President and Vice Presidents of the Student Body shall be sworn in during the last session of Senate of the spring semester.
- C. Appointment of Senators
- a. Should vacancies occur with any of the Senators elected by the Student Body, the Membership Chair of the respective Senate may appoint another Senator. These newly appointed Senators will remain in their seated positions until that seat is up for re-election.
- D. Delegate Requirements
- a. Each newly placed delegate member must receive a copy of the Constitution, the General Bylaws, and the Bylaws of their assigned Committee. The Delegate must read and understand all information in the packet.
  - b. Delegates must be trained further by their Committee Chairperson for committee-specific tasks.
  - c. Delegates who resign from their position must give written notification to their Committee Chairperson and the Chief of Staff.

#### **Section 4. The Role of the Judiciary Committee**

- A. Grievances and Campaign Violations
- a. The Judiciary Committee manages the grievance and appeals process for elections.
  - b. A grievance can be brought to the Membership Committee anytime from the first Mandatory Candidate Meeting until seventy-two (72) hours after polls have closed.
  - c. The Membership Committee shall report all grievances to the Judiciary Committee within forty-eight (48) hours of their receipt.
  - d. A violation may be filed by any student to the Judiciary Committee regarding violation of the election rules.
  - e. The Judiciary Committee as a group may not file complaints to itself regarding a particular candidate.
  - f. A violation must cite clearly and concisely the rules presumed to be violated. Evidence may also be submitted with the violation. All violations must be filed correctly and within the timelines in order to be considered by the Judiciary Committee.
  - g. The person for which the violation is against will be contacted and told of the alleged charge. The Judiciary Committee must establish a hearing within seventy-two (72) hours of receiving the violation and must contact both parties within that time period to establish a time and place for a hearing.
  - h. A violation may be resolved in several ways including:
    - i. Dismissal of Charge: The Judiciary Committee found the charges to be unfounded.

- ii. Disqualification: The Judiciary Committee has decided that there is significant evidence that the rule(s) were violated in a severe nature.
- i. A majority vote of the Judiciary Committee shall decide the resolution of the complaint.
- j. Decisions of the Judiciary Committee may be appealed in writing within one week of the written opinion should new evidence or extenuating circumstances be established.

## **Article X. Impeachment, Removal from Office, and Vacancies**

### **Section 1. Resignation**

- A. A member of the SGA may resign by submitting a written notice to the head of their branch. Resignation from any office within the SGA shall result in the surrendering of all privileges and positions attained as a result of being a member of the SGA.
- B. The Vice Presidents, Treasurer, Chief of Staff, and Communications Chair shall report their resignation to the President of the Student Body.
- C. The Membership Chair of each Senate shall receive the resignations from Senators.
- D. Committee Chairpersons shall receive the resignations from committee Delegates.
- E. The Chief Justice shall receive the resignations from all members of the Judiciary Committee.
- F. The President shall receive any and all University Committee Appointees' resignations.
- G. If the Chief Justice resigns, they must turn in their resignation to the President and SGA Advisor.
- H. If the Student Body President resigns, they must turn in their resignation to the Chief Justice, the SGA Advisor, and the Vice Presidents. Their position shall be filled by the Vice President of Undergraduates in even years and the Vice President of Graduate and Professional Students in odd years. If the respective Vice President fills the role of President, then the opposing Vice President becomes the Vice President of the entire Student Body until the next external election.

### **Section 2. Impeachment**

- A. Grounds for Impeachment and Removal  
Any member of the SGA that evades their duties as set down by the Constitution or these Bylaws, or commits any act that is determined to be detrimental to the welfare of the Student Body, is subject to impeachment. No officer may be brought up for the same charge(s) twice resulting from a particular incident.
- B. Impeachment and Removal Initiation  
Any charge may be brought by any student on a member of the SGA and submitted to the Chief Justice. This act would initiate the investigation process. Upon submission of the charges, the Judiciary Committee shall review the allegations and should two Justices find the case valid, the Judiciary Committee shall move forward with the investigation. Impeachment and Removal proceedings shall begin the week following this ruling.
- C. Impeachment Proceedings

- a. The Senate shall have the sole power to try impeachments. When the Senate sits as jurors in impeachment proceedings, they shall be sworn to the following affirmation: *“I affirm that I shall hear all testimony and evidence presented in an unbiased and fair manner. By hearing the following testimony, I am aware that I am bound by this University’s Rules and Procedures.”*
- b. When the President of the Student Body or Vice President of the Student Body is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside. In all other cases of impeachment, the Vice President shall preside or appoint a Senator to preside. The Senate may hold hearings, interviews, or any other inquiries in order to investigate all articles of impeachment at its discretion. The Senate shall observe quorum during all hearings that involve an investigation. Upon conclusion of the investigation and a verdict presented, the Judiciary Committee shall compile all of the findings into a report.
- c. All results of the impeachment investigations shall be forwarded to all areas of the SGA. All members of the SGA are required to cooperate with all impeachment proceedings if their services are needed.
- d. Once a verdict is reached, the party could be removed.

### **Section 3. Automatic Removal from Office**

- A. A member of the SGA shall automatically be removed when:
  - a. The member is separated, dismissed, or withdrawn from Virginia Commonwealth University.
  - b. The member fails to remove themselves from the status of academic warning or probation after one semester.
  - c. Only the President of the Student Body, the Membership Chairs, and the Chief Justice may automatically remove a member of the SGA.
    - i. The President of the Student Body may only remove members of the Executive Branch.
    - ii. The Membership Chair may only remove Senators and Delegates from their respective Senate.
    - iii. The Chief Justice may only remove Associate Justices with the approval of the President.

### **Section 4. Process for Removal**

- A. Grounds for Removal
  - a. Any individual specified in Article X, Section 3, who knowingly evades their duties as set down by the Constitution or these General Bylaws or commits any act that is determined to be detrimental to the welfare of the Student Body is subject to removal from their position.
  - b. No Chair may be brought up for the same charge(s) twice resulting from a particular incident.
- B. Removal Initiation

- a. Any charge may be brought by any member of the SGA Senate and submitted to the Chief Justice.
  - b. Upon submission of the charges, the Judiciary Committee shall review the allegations, and should two Justices find the case valid, the Judiciary Committee shall move forward with the investigation.
  - c. Removal proceedings shall begin the week following this ruling.
- C. Removal Proceedings
- a. If the person being removed is at the Executive Branch level, then the Senates must convene collectively. Otherwise, the Senate to which the member belongs shall hear the case.
  - b. When the respective Senate sits as jurors in removal proceedings, they shall be sworn to the following affirmation: *“I affirm that I shall hear all testimony and evidence presented in an unbiased and fair manner. By hearing the following testimony, I am aware that I am bound by this University’s Rules and Procedures.”*
  - c. The Senate may hold hearings, interviews, or any other inquiries in order to investigate all articles of removal at its discretion.
  - d. The Senate shall observe quorum during all investigation hearings.
  - e. Upon conclusion of the investigation and a verdict presented, the Judiciary Committee shall compile all of the findings into a report.
  - f. All results of the removal investigations shall be forwarded to all areas of the SGA.
  - g. All members of the SGA are required to cooperate with all removal proceedings if their services are needed.

## **Section 5. Vacancies**

- A. Should vacancies arise due to resignation or removal from office, they are to be filled as written in these General Bylaws.
- B. Should a Senator relinquish their office, the office shall be filled at the discretion of the Chair of the Senate and confirmed by simple majority vote of the Senate.
- C. Should an Associate Justice relinquish their office, the office shall be filled by the President of the Student Body with confirmation from the Senate. Should a member of the Executive relinquish their office, the office shall be filled by the President of the Student Body with confirmation by the Senate.

## **Article XI. Appeals**

### **Section 1. Judicial Appeals**

- A. Actions and decisions of any case heard by the Judiciary should be made forty-eight (48) hours after the verdict has been received. All appeals should be submitted in the same manner as any other case. Verdicts on appeals may not be appealed.

## **Article XII. Terms**

- A. Unconstitutional entails any legislation that deters from the provisions within the governing documents of the SGA.
- B. Any reference to quorum in these Bylaws means two-thirds of either Senate.
- C. Any reference to majority in these Bylaws that is not specified means 50% of the Senate and one additional Senator.