Constitution of the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association

We, the students of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), have written and accepted this document as an enabling force in leading and unifying the Student Body. It shall be the purpose of this document to provide order and structure to the system of government to which the Student Government Association (SGA) ascribes. It shall be the mission of the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association to effectively represent the Student Body by upholding and responding to the Student Body’s concerns, wishes, and demands and appropriate funds to student organizations. Therefore, let this document be ordained as the Constitution of the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Body Government.

Article I

Section 1.
The name of the governing organization of the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Body shall be the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association, hereafter referenced as the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Government Association (VCU SGA or SGA).

Section 2.
The VCU SGA exists to address all matters concerning the best interests of VCU and its student body, and serves to:
1. Facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between the students of VCU,
2. Take action to improve the quality of student services and academic programs in order to further enhance the education of VCU students.
3. Plan, promote, and execute a variety of social, cultural, and advocacy events to enhance fellowship, personal growth, and enjoyment of the student body and the larger VCU community.
4. Budget the allocated Student Activity Fee funds to best serve the needs of the student body while maintaining an operational fund.

Section 3.
All students registered for one or more academic credits on the Richmond, Virginia campuses of VCU shall be members of the Student Body. All members of SGA shall be a member of the VCU student body.

Members of the Student Body shall be entitled to vote in any election held by the SGA and shall be subject to the rules and regulations presented by the SGA.

The qualifications for participating within the SGA shall be based exclusively on academia and personal and student conduct. No student shall be denied the right to participate within the SGA based on race, creed, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or beliefs, and any other discriminatory practice as stated by the Virginia Commonwealth University’s Student Code of Conduct. All members of SGA shall maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75.
Article II

Section 1.
The Legislative power of SGA shall be vested in the Undergraduate and Graduate and Professional Student Senates. The two Senates shall be composed of Senators elected directly by the Student Body. The number of Senators shall be determined in the General Bylaws. Senators shall be elected for a period of one year, and each shall have one vote within their respective Senate.

Section 2.
The Vice Presidents shall be Presidents of their respective Senate. The President of Senate shall have no vote in either Senate unless the Senate is divided equally on the issue, in which case the President of Senate shall have a vote.

Section 3.
The two Senates shall choose their officers. Each Senate shall include a Speaker, Secretary and committee chair for each respective permanent and standing committee.

Section 4.
Each Legislative Body shall have the power to try impeachments. For an officer to be impeached, a majority of each Senate shall reach the same agreement with two-thirds of Senators for each Senate present unless the Judiciary Committee has reached a unanimous decision. Judgment in case of impeachment shall not extend further than the removal from office and/or disqualification to hold any office within the SGA.

Article III

Section 1.
The executive power shall be vested in a President of the Student Body. This person shall hold their office for the duration of one year and, together with a Vice President of Undergraduate Students and a Vice President of Graduate and Professional Students chosen from the same term, be elected during the spring semester before spring break.

Section 2.
The President shall have the power to nominate and, with the consent of both Senates, appoint representatives of the SGA to university committees. They shall appoint Justices to the Judiciary Committee and all other offices that are not appointed by the Senates or by a vote from the Student Body. All appointments shall be approved by each Senate with a two-thirds vote of a quorum of Senators.

Section 3.
The responsibilities of the president shall include a state of the student body address each semester that will be recorded and readily available to the student body within a reasonable amount of time. The President shall also appoint Executive Officer(s) to be available at the Richmond, Virginia campuses of VCU throughout the summer break.

Should the President not be able to meet any of the above requirements, the Vice President of Undergraduate Students in even academic years shall be required to assume the responsibilities of the President until the President is again able, and the Vice President of Graduate and Professional Students in odd academic years shall be required to assume the responsibilities of the President until the President is again able.
Section 4.
The President, Vice Presidents, and all other officers of the SGA shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, bribery, theft, or other high crimes and misdemeanors. The party convicted may, be liable and subject to any type of trial or punishment established by the Code of Virginia, the United States of America, or the VCU Student Code of Conduct.

Section 5.
The President shall have veto power to any Senate Bill or Senate Resolution.

Article IV

Section 1.
The Judiciary Committee shall be comprised of five members. These members shall include one Chief Justice, a Deputy Chief Justice, and three Associate Justices. At least two of the five Justices shall be graduate or professional students. The Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice shall be from opposing Senate, i.e. if the Chief Justice is an undergraduate, then the Deputy Chief Justice shall be a graduate or professional student, or vice versa.

Members of the Judiciary Committee serve two-year appointments until they resign, leave VCU, or are impeached from office. If a vacancy shall arise, the President, with a two-thirds majority vote of confirmation from members present in both Senates, shall appoint a member of the Student Body to fill a vacant seat.

Section 2.
The business of the Judiciary Committee shall deal with the following things: election violations, judicial interpretations, judicial injunctions, impeachment and removal proceedings, mediation between student organizations, internal Senate elections, and record keeping of constitutional amendments.

Article V

Section 1.
A bill or resolution may be proposed and presented by a Senator or by a petition with the signatures of two-hundred and fifty (250) members of the Student Body. All proposed bills or resolutions shall be submitted to the Speaker of each respective Senate.

Section 2.
A bill or resolution requires a simple majority vote of both Undergraduate and Graduate and Professional Student Senates with quorum present. The bill or resolution is then presented to the SGA President and Chief of Staff for approval. If approved, the bill or resolution passes. If not approved, the President may return the bill or resolution with their objections to both Senates. If not returned to the Senate within ten business days, it automatically passes. A three-fourths vote by both Senates may overrule the President.

Section 3.
The votes of the Senate shall be determined by yeas and nays, the results of all voting shall be made available to the VCU Student Body.

Article VI

Section 1.
If an amendment shall be deemed necessary for the betterment of this document, it shall first be proposed to one or both Senates by any member of the SGA or by a petition with signatures from
500 members of the Student Body. This having taken place, the Senate shall hear the amendment for no less than two sessions before voting. The Senate shall give a two-thirds majority vote of approval from all present members for the amendment to proceed. If the amendment is successful in acquiring the votes needed, it shall be placed upon the ballot of the next election for referendum by the Student Body.

Section 2.
The Compensation and Evaluation Committee will operate on a biennial basis to review current compensation and evaluation processes. The Compensation and Evaluation Committee may recommend any changes for the following fiscal school-years and must be chaired by a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Any recommended changes by the Compensation and Evaluation Committee must be reviewed and approved by the SGA adviser before implementation.

Article VII

Section 1.
A majority of the voting Student Body shall be sufficient to ratify the establishment of this constitution between all members of the VCU Student Body.

This Constitution shall be inoperative unless it has been ratified. This Constitution supersedes the general bylaws and voids all previous constitutions and bylaws.

Section 2.
This Constitution shall establish the guidelines for the SGA General Bylaws.

The purpose of the SGA General Bylaws is to further explain and define the constitution and the roles and duties of the offices within the SGA. The bylaws may only be modified by a two-thirds vote from the two Senates with quorum present or by ratification by a majority vote of the Student Body.

Section 3.
This document may only be suspended, dissolved, or otherwise destroyed in its entirety by a vote of three-fourths of the Senate of all members present and a majority of voting students within the Student Body of VCU.

Ratified by the VCU Student Body: April 13, 2018