

Constitution of the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Body Government

We, the students of Virginia Commonwealth University, 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 Body 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. 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 Student Body of Virginia Commonwealth University shall be the Student Government Association of Virginia Commonwealth University, hereafter referenced as the Student Government Association (SGA).

Section 2.

The purpose of the Student Government Association of Virginia Commonwealth University shall be:

1. To facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between the students of VCU, including holding two forums each semester.
2. To take action to increase the quality of student services and academic programs in order to further enhance the education of VCU students, including participating in the University Council.
3. To 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. To address all matters concerning the best interests of the VCU student body.
5. To attend to those things helping to further the goals of VCU.
6. To be good stewards of allocated funds and maintain a budget, within the allocated funds, to most effectively serve the student body.

Section 3.

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.

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

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The qualifications for participating within the Student Government Association shall be based solely on academia and personal conduct. No student shall be denied the right to participate within the Student Government Association because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, or beliefs.

Article II**Section 1.**

The SGA shall have a Senate of Undergraduates and a Senate of Graduate and Professional Students. The two Senates of the SGA 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 the Senate.

Should a vacancy occur with any of the Senators elected by the Student Body, the Chief of Staff may appoint a temporary Senator by application process until the Student Body fills the vacancies by election. These temporary Senators will remain in their seated positions until that seat is up for re-election. These temporary appointments must be approved with and only by a two-thirds majority of the respective Senate.

The two Senates shall compel the attendance of their members and may censure a delinquent member by a majority vote of the respective Senate, with quorum being present.

Section 2.

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

Section 3.

The two Senates shall choose their officers. Each Senate must elect a Chair and appoint a Secretary from among their respective members. All Committees in the Senate deemed as permanent and standing shall have a Committee Chair appointed.

It shall be the responsibility of each Senate's Chair to serve as the leader of the Senate in instances in which the President of the Senate is unable to fulfill their duties. The Chair of the Senate shall also create and distribute the agenda for each Senate meeting and shall be responsible for the assignment of all bills and resolutions discussed within each session of the Senate. The Chair shall be a non-voting, permanent member of each Committee deemed by the Senate to be permanent and standing. The Chair shall receive for their services a compensation that shall not be diminished during their continuance in office.

It shall be the responsibility of each Committee Chair to oversee the work and progress of all bills, resolutions, and other such business within their Committee. All Committee Chairs of Standing Committees shall receive for their services a compensation that shall not be diminished during their continuance in office. No person may chair more than one Committee simultaneously. All Chairs

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All serving members of the two Senates shall be required to attend meetings of their respective Senate, meetings of the committees, and any training sessions deemed necessary by the Executive Branch of the Student Government Association.

Section 4.

The Senates shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. For an officer to be impeached, a majority of each Senate must reach the same agreement with two-thirds of Senators for each Senate present. Judgments in case of impeachment shall not extend further than the removal from office and/or disqualification to hold any office within the Student Government Association; the party convicted may, however, 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.

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 Undergraduates 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 and Vice Presidents shall receive for their services a compensation that shall not be diminished during their continuance in office.

Before the President-Elect shall enter the office of the President of the Student Body, they shall take the following oath of affirmation, conducted by the Chief Justice, or in their absence, another Justice:

“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 Government.”

Section 3.

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

Section 4.

The President shall, at the beginning of each semester, give to the Senates information on the state of the Student Body and recommend measures as they judge necessary to accomplish the goals they have set forth in their own agenda.

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This event shall be open to not only Senators, but also any member of the Student Body who may wish to attend. The event shall also be recorded and readily available to members of the Student Body within a reasonable amount of time.

As part of the responsibility of the President, the President must appoint an Executive Officer(s) to be available at the Richmond, VA campuses of Virginia Commonwealth University throughout the summer break.

Should the President not be able to meet any of the above requirements, the Vice President of Undergraduates in even 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 years shall be required to assume the responsibilities of the President until the President is again able.

Section 5.

The President, Vice Presidents, and all other officers of the Student Government Association shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, bribery, theft, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.

Article IV

Section 1.

The Judiciary Committee shall comprise 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 must be graduate or professional students. The Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice must be from opposing Senates, i.e. if the Chief Justice is an undergraduate, then the Deputy Chief Justice must be a graduate or professional student, or vice versa.

Members of the Judiciary Committee serve two-year appointments until they resign, leave Virginia Commonwealth University, 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 investigations, mediation between student organizations, internal Senate elections, SGA representation on the Honor Council, 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

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resolutions shall be submitted to the Chair of a respective Senate. It shall be at the discretion of the Chair to determine where the bill or resolution properly fits within the Senate agenda.

Section 2.

Every bill or resolution shall pass through the Senate in which it is proposed and be voted upon either in committee or on the Senate floor. A two-thirds majority vote of the Senate of all members present is required for the bill or resolution to be approved by that Senate. It shall then be sent to the Executive Branch where the President of the Student Body, Vice Presidents, and Chairs of both Senates will determine if the bill or resolution is relevant to the opposing Senate; if so, the bill or resolution shall be forwarded to the opposing Senate where it may also be voted upon either in committee or on the Senate floor. A two-thirds majority vote of the opposing Senate of all members present is required for the bill or resolution to be approved by that Senate. In either case, the bill or resolution shall then be returned to the President of the Student Body; if the President approves of the legislation, they shall sign it and it shall become Student Body Law. If only one Senate approves the bill or resolution, then the bill or resolution will only be applicable to the governing body that approved the bill or resolution, i.e. undergraduates or graduate and professional students. The President may also return the bill or resolution with their objections to both Senates and the Senates shall proceed to reconsider it. If after such reconsideration, two-thirds of all Senate members present agree to pass the bill or resolution, it shall become Student Body law. If any bill or resolution shall not be returned by the President within ten business days, it shall automatically become Student Body law. 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. Senators may also abstain from voting and their vote will not count towards the total. The results of all voting shall be kept within the minutes of Senate. In all cases, the names of the persons voting for, against, and abstaining from voting on the legislation shall be entered in the minutes should division be called.

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 a member of the Student Government Association Senate or by a petition with signatures from five hundred (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 must 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.

Article VII**Section 1.**

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The ratification of a majority of the voting Student Body shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution between all members of the Student Body of the Virginia Commonwealth University.

This Constitution shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as expressed in Section 1 of this Article at the beginning of the spring semester. The elections of the spring semester shall be conducted in such a manner as to reflect the aforementioned offices described within this document. However, this document shall take effect as the Student Government Association of Virginia Commonwealth University Constitution only on the last Senate meeting of the spring semester concurrent to the year of the ratification of this document.

This Constitution shall supersede all previous constitutions and bylaws and make them null and void.

Section 2.

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 Virginia Commonwealth University. It may, however, be amended as stated within Article VI.

Approved by the SGA: January 23, 2017
Ratified by the VCU University Council: _____