



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (SGA)

**CONSTITUTION**

## **STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA**

We, the students of the University of North Alabama, in order to responsibly participate in the decision making processes of the University at large; to protect and defend the rights and responsibilities entrusted to the students by the University; to provide for cultural, social, physical, and educational welfare; to foster a spirit of unity among students; to cultivate a better relationship between administration, faculty, and students; and to encourage individual responsibility, by the authority granted to us by the Board of Trustees and University President, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the students of the University of North Alabama.

### **ARTICLE I**

**Section 1.** The name of the organization shall be the Student Government Association of the University of North Alabama.

**Section 2.** The Student Government Association shall be comprised of full-time undergraduate and graduate students.

**Section 3.** The Student Government Association shall be organized into four (4) branches: the Executive branch, Legislative branch, Judicial branch, and the Freshman Forum branch. All meetings shall be held on the campus of the University of North Alabama.

### **ARTICLE II Declaration of Purpose**

**Section 1.** To protect and defend the rights and responsibilities of the University to the students and the students to the University.

**Section 2.** To uphold the Constitution and Code of Laws of the Student Government Association.

**Section 3.** To advocate to the best of our abilities the wants and needs of the entire student body, disregarding any personal biases or affiliations.

**Section 4.** To assist in University Decision Making through the power granted by Shared Governance.

**Section 5.** The motto of the Student Government Association is leadership, advocacy, and service.

### **ARTICLE III Student Senate**

**Section 1.** The purpose of the Student Senate is to represent the Student Body as a whole. Legislative powers of the Student Government Association shall be vested in the Student Senate. Special powers of the Student Senate shall be as follows:

A. Proposition and implementation of legislation which concerns the Student Body.

- B. Origination of all legislation involving SGA budget matters.
- C. Authority to override a Presidential veto by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.
- D. Initiation of impeachment proceedings against any member of the Student Senate, including the Executive Branch, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present.
- E. Bringing of formal charges against any individual student of the Student Government Association for violation of any part of this constitution.

**Section 2.** The Student Senate shall be composed of 30 voting Senators, 25 of which are elected. The 25 elected seats shall be apportioned based on the percentage of students each Academic College holds in regard to the total number of enrolled students. If the percentage of Senators does not result in a whole number, numbers containing a decimal value of .5 or above will be rounded up to the nearest whole number, and numbers containing a decimal value of below .5 shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number. In addition, members of the SGA Executive Branch are to be part of the Student Senate as non-voting members, including the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Chief of Staff, Historian, Communications Director, and Diversity & Inclusion Advocate.

**Section 3.** Representatives of the Student Senate shall be elected during the Spring SGA Election. Every academic college shall be granted a proportional number of Senators relative to the Student body. Any of the remaining seats shall be filled with a General Senator by appointment from the SGA President-elect and the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the newly elected Student Senate. Any student, regardless of college affiliation, shall be eligible for any of the remaining seats. Neither Collegiate Senators, General Senators, nor Freshman Senators shall have precedence over the other.

**Section 4.** With the entering freshman class and transfer students being included in the student body but unable to participate in the Spring Election, the Student Government Association shall designate one (1) seat for freshmen and two (2) seats for transfer students. Also, to ensure representation, international students shall be granted (2) student senate seats. The SGA President and Vice-President shall make these appointments in the fall of the SGA term and shall be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Student Senate present. These spots are to be filled by the first Senate meeting of August.

**Section 5.** Their enrollment proportions shall decide representation for every degree-granting college based on enrollment numbers from the previous spring semester. An Ad-Hoc committee shall be formed and consist of the Elections and Recruitment Chairperson, and at least four senators, one from each academic college, to reevaluate the established number of senators and to alter this number if necessary.

**Section 6.** Representatives of the Student Senate shall meet the following qualifications listed below:

- A. Enrolled in the University of North Alabama as a full-time student. The student must fill out an application to serve as a Senator before the election.
- B. Maintenance of a cumulative scholastic grade point average of 2.5 or higher.
- C. Not serving on any other branch of SGA.
- D. Present a verification of enrollment within the academic college that a Collegiate Senator is running. If a student is not enrolled in their academic college, then they must present a statement of intent to enroll in the academic college once academic qualifications are met. To also present a statement of purpose for a Senator's intended service to the student body at the University of North Alabama.
- E. Taking an oath to uphold the Constitution of the Student Government Association for the University of North Alabama.

**Section 7.** An advisor to the Student Senate shall be selected in the manner prescribed by the Vice President of Student Affairs.

**Section 8.** Standing Committee Chairs, Senate Pro Tempore, and Senate Freshman Forum Advisors shall be chosen as outlined in the Code of Laws.

#### **ARTICLE IV Freshman Forum**

**Section 1.** The purpose of the Freshman Forum is to provide education, service, and leadership opportunities for freshmen at the University of North Alabama and in the local community.

**Section 2.** The Freshman Forum shall be composed of a number of members determined by the Code of Laws.

**Section 3.** Representatives of Freshman Forum shall meet the following qualifications listed below:

- A. Must be a full-time freshman who has not completed more than one semester at the University of North Alabama nor more than thirty-one (31) semester hours of credit. The student must fill out an application to serve on Freshman Forum.
- B. Maintenance of a cumulative scholastic grade point average of 2.25 or higher.
- C. Not serving on any other branch of SGA.
- D. Taking an oath to uphold the Constitution of the Student Government Association for the University of the North Alabama.

**Section 4.** With Freshman Forum promoting involvement and leadership among the Freshman class through Student Engagement, it shall be overseen by two Freshman Forum Advisors and by the SGA Advisor.

## ARTICLE V Judicial Branch

**Section 1.** All judicial powers of the Student Government Association shall be vested in the Student Court, which shall be a court of original and appellate jurisdiction.

**Section 2.** The Student Court shall be composed of four (4) Associate Justices and one (1) Chief Justice. The Student Court shall be appointed as follows:

- A. The Chief Justice shall be appointed by the President of Student Government Association and shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate present.
- B. Two (2) justices shall be appointed by the Vice President of Senate and shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate present.
- C. One (1) justice shall be appointed by the SGA Treasurer and shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate present.
- D. One (1) justice shall be appointed by the SGA Secretary and shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate present.
- E. The Chief Justice shall be sworn in by their predecessor and shall then immediately swear in the remaining four (4) Associate Justices at the Student Government Inauguration.
- F. A vacancy within the court shall be filled with an appointment by the President of SGA and be approved by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate present.
- G. Justices shall be appointed no later than three (3) weeks after elections. If the Student Senate fails to approve a position by four (4) weeks after officer elections then the current SGA President shall appoint the vacant positions with 2/3 vote approval of the Student Senate.

**Section 3.** Qualifications for Student Justices shall be as follows:

- A. Junior or Senior standing for position of the Chief Justice
- B. Maintenance of a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5
- C. A Justice must be considered a full-time student under university standards.
- D. Taking of an oath to put first the interest of justice and of the Student Body in all cases reviewed.
- E. The term of Student Court Justice shall be in one (1) year increments of service in consecutive Fall and Spring Semesters of the year that they are appointed.
- F. A Justice shall not be able to serve on any other branch of SGA during their term as a justice.

- G. A simple majority of Justices shall have previously served one full term on any branch of SGA in order to be qualified for office.

**Section 4.** The Student Court shall have jurisdiction as follows:

- A. It will have original jurisdiction in all cases involving this Constitution and Code of Laws.
- B. It also may act on any special case referred to it by the University Administration.
- C. It will create and officiate over the SGA Rules Test, which shall cover the SGA's Code of Laws, Constitution, and Robert's Rules for the Student Senate.
- D. To clarify, and interpret the Constitution, Code of Laws, and Robert's Rules of Order for the SGA Senate.
- E. To hear appeals and/or cases concerning violations of absenteeism, the Code of Ethics, or SGA officer campaigns outlined within the SGA Code of Laws. The committee will also hear appeals for dismissals.
- F. The Chief Justice will swear-in newly appointed SGA members and officers.
- G. It will adhere to the Constitution and the Code of Laws of the Student Government Association.

**Section 5.** Any decision of the Student Court may be appealed directly to the SGA Advisor and Judicial Advisor.

**Section 6.** An advisor to the Student Court shall be selected in the manner indicated by the SGA Advisor.

**Section 7.** Impeachment of a Justice may take place as defined as:

- A. If charged with violating the Constitution, the oath of office, or violating the SGA Code of Ethics, a justice may be impeached by two-thirds (2/3) vote by the Student Senate present.
- B. Each committee on the Student Senate shall select a member to conduct the impeachment proceedings.
- C. A justice will be immediately removed from the Student Court if convicted of a felony.

**Section 8.** Student Court Hearings:

- A. Hearings shall only occur in the presence of every Justice.
- B. If a Justice has a conflict of interest, they shall surrender their voting rights in the hearing. In the event of a tie, the advisor of the Judicial Branch will make the final ruling.

- C. Hearings shall be known to the public in a week's advance and shall be open to the public for attendance.

## ARTICLE VI Executive Branch

**Section 1.** All executive powers shall be vested in a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Student Body shall elect all Executive positions, excluding the Diversity & Inclusion Advocate, Historian, Chief of Staff, Pro-Tempore, Freshman Forum Advisors, and Communications Director.

**Section 2.** Duties of the President shall be the following:

- A. The official spokesperson for the Student Government Association.
- B. Approval or vetoing of any act of the Student Senate within two (2) weeks of the time legislation is received. A presidential veto may be overruled by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Student Senate present.
- C. Appointment of Communications Director, Historian, Pro-Tempore, Diversity & Inclusion Advocate, Freshman Forum Advisors, and Chief of Staff would be subject to approval by a 2/3 vote by the Student Senate present.
- D. Ability to call a special session of the Student Senate or Executive Council.

**Section 3.** The duties of the Vice-President shall be as follows:

- A. Assuming the office of President if the office becomes vacant and/or until the office is filled by special election.
- B. Presiding over both the Student Senate and Committee Chair meetings.

**Section 4.** The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows:

- A. Maintenance of a permanent and complete record of all the proceedings of the Student Senate.
- B. These records shall be open to any student.
- C. The official receiver of all committee reports, important correspondence, copies of all contracts and elections statistics- all of which are to be retained in the secretarial duties requested by the President.

**Section 5.** The duties of the Treasurer shall be as follows:

- A. Having charge of and accounts for each semester, all property and funds of the Student Senate and to disburse these funds as approved by the Student Senate.
- B. Accounting for all money for which the Student Government is responsible, keep a permanent file and make monthly reports to the Student Senate on its current financial status.

- C. The publishing of a report that shall be distributed to all branches of the Student Government Association and the faculty advisors based on request.

**Section 6.** The duties of the Communications Director shall be as follows:

- A. Provide a marketing plan for the upcoming SGA term.
- B. Create written and digital content to keep students informed of efforts from the Student Government Association.
- C. Maintain SGA social media pages.

**Section 7.** The duties of the Diversity & Inclusion Advocate shall be as follows:

- A. Communicate with University Departments and Registered Student Organizations to guarantee equitable opportunity for all students.
- B. Responsible for promoting a safe and welcoming campus for all students at the University of North Alabama.
- C. Oversee the SGA RSO outreach initiatives.
- D. Communicate with the Division of Students Affairs concerning Local, State, and National legislation that may affect the campus community.
- E. Work with the chair of the Student Welfare Committee in order to orchestrate an event for the campus community.

**Section 8.** Qualifications for the Student Government executive branch shall be as follows:

- A. Acquisition and maintenance of a GPA of 2.75 or higher.
- B. Provide a statement of purpose of the importance of the Student Government Association in serving the student body and their plans for office.
- C. A full-time, graduate or undergraduate, student of the University of North Alabama.
- D. Have the classification of a Junior or higher for the President and Vice- President of Student Senate, the fall semester of the year they assume that office. A sophomore, junior, or senior may fill the office of Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, Chief of Staff, Pro-Tempore, Freshman Forum Advisors, Communications Director, and Diversity & Inclusion Advocate.

## **ARTICLE VII Elections and Selections**

**Section 1.** The election of the Student Senators shall be held in conjunction with the election of the Executive Committee. In order to be listed on the ballot, candidates must submit a declaration of candidacy to the Elections and Recruitment Committee Chair along with a completed application for Senate.

**Section 2.** In order to run for a Collegiate Senator seat, the candidate must also submit a verification of their enrollment in their primary academic college before being placed on the ballot. If a candidate has not yet been admitted to an academic college, then they must submit a statement of intent that they will enter into that academic college qualifications. Candidates with an undeclared major shall run for their assigned college.

**Section 3.** Any Collegiate Senator that changes their major during their term shall remain qualified for their seat so long as they do not change academic colleges. If a Collegiate Senator does not retain their enrollment in the academic college that they represent, they shall fill any open seat as a General Senator, leaving their previous seat open as originally apportioned to then be filled by Presidential Appointment. If there is no eligible candidate for the specific academic college, then the seat shall be filled as a General Senator Seat.

**Section 4.** Election must be held two (2) weeks prior to Spring Break every year. Newly elected officers will assume office 2 weeks before final examinations.

**Section 5.** Any vacancy in the Student Senate shall be filled by a qualified Presidential Appointment which shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote by the Student Senate.

**Section 6.** If no candidate running for an office of the Student Government Association receives a majority of votes in the election, a runoff will be conducted between five (5) to seven (7) days to determine the duly elected officer.

**Section 7.** In the event an elected executive office becomes vacant before November 1 of the fall semester, a special election shall be held to fill this vacancy no later than three (3) weeks after the vacancy occurs.

**Section 8.** If an executive officer position becomes vacant during the summer, then their spot shall remain vacant until the fall when a special election can be held.

**Section 9.** In the event that an elected executive office becomes vacant after November 1 of the fall semester, that office shall be filled by an interim officer appointed by a special committee composed of the executive council and the SGA Advisor. This appointment shall also be subject to a two-thirds (2/3) approval of the Student Senate.

## **ARTICLE VIII Committees and Organizations**

**Section 1.** Standing Committees of the SGA shall be delimited and regulated by the Code of Laws of the Student Government Association.

**Section 2.** Ad Hoc Committees shall be formed as necessary by the President of the Student Government Association.

**Section 3.** All committees and Presidential appointments shall be approved by a two- thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate.

## **ARTICLE IX Summer Government**

**Section 1.** During the summer session, any general business concerning the SGA shall be handled by a summer executive branch consisting of the President, Vice President of Senate, Treasurer, and Secretary. Legislation shall not be passed during the summer session, unless a special session is called by the SGA President.

## **ARTICLE X Miscellaneous**

**Section 1.** Each organization sponsoring a university-wide election shall submit to the Student Senate a written statement listing the procedures governing eligibility, nominations, campaigning, voting and special instructions concerning the election and those personnel responsible for carrying out the procedure. The Student Senate shall have authority, by a two- thirds (2/3) vote of the members present, to approve, disapprove or change all or any portion of any procedures so presented. A copy of each approved election procedure will be kept on file by the SGA secretary and will be the only authorized procedure until it is replaced by a new procedure.

**Section 2.** The act of any elected officer, committee, or organization existing under the Constitution may be repealed or amended or any elected officer may be removed, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes cast at a special student referendum for the purpose, provided a two (2) weeks' notice of the election and its purpose has been given. This referendum will be held if called for by a petition of ten percent (10%) of the student body within two (2) weeks of the action in question.

**Section 3.** In the event of a called Executive Session all proceedings that occur should not become public knowledge under any circumstances. This shall include anyone present during Executive Session. Violation of this section shall result in immediate dismissal upon approval by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at the Student Senate.

## **ARTICLE XI Amendments**

**Section 1.** Proposed amendments to and revision of the Constitution shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senators present and publicly advertised before being brought before the Student Body for a vote.

**Section 2.** Proposed amendments to and revisions of the Constitution must be posted and advertised for at least one (1) week before submission to the Student Body.

**Section 3.** Amendments to and revisions of this Constitution may be ratified by the assenting vote of a majority of those voting in a scheduled Student Body election.

**Section 4.** The Student Senate may, with two-thirds (2/3) approval, bring a special election on Constitutional amendments to the Student Body. Special elections may not be brought

forward within three (3) weeks prior and three (3) weeks following a scheduled Student Body election.

**Section 5.** Revisions to this Constitution shall become effective the semester after its ratification.

**Section 6.** Any laws changed are to be noted by the Judicial Branch.

**Revisions**

**Referendum Vote September 2022, Amended Fall 2022, Implemented August 2023**

**Referendum Vote September 2023, Amended Fall 2023, Implemented January 2024**

**Document corrected for the referendum changes as noted above. (March 1, 2024)**

**Referendum Vote March 2024, Amended Spring 2024, Implemented August 2024**

**Referendum Vote March 2025, Amended Spring 2025, Implemented August 2025**