

# **Gustavus Adolphus College Student Senate Constitution**

*Adopted November 24, 2008*

## **Preamble**

We, the student body of Gustavus Adolphus College, in order to uphold the values of Excellence, Community, Justice, Service, and Faith; to safeguard the rights of students; to foster an atmosphere in which students may freely pursue their academic endeavors; and to elevate the general welfare of the campus community, do hereby establish this constitution of the Gustavus Adolphus College Student Senate.

## **Article I – Definitions**

- 1) Senate: the body representing all students (also known as Student Senate)
- 2) Student: any person taking courses at Gustavus Adolphus College, either full-time or part-time
- 3) Member: a student constitutionally elected by the student body or appointed to any Senate position
- 4) Senator: a student serving a specific constituency (Hall, Class, or International Students)
- 5) Absence: the failure to attend a scheduled meeting of the full Senate, subject to the discretion of the Administrative Director
- 6) Half absence: arriving late at or leaving prior to adjournment of a scheduled meeting of the Senate, subject to the discretion of the Administrative Director
- 7) Community comment: an opportunity for any member of the Gustavus community to address the Senate at each full Senate meeting
- 8) ILS: the Intentional Learning and Service housing option provided by Residential Life. All members of the program shall be a member of the ILS constituency regardless of their residential location
- 9) Student-at-large: any student not currently holding, or seeking election to, a Senate position
- 10) Full Senate Quorum: a majority of all voting seats prescribed in this Constitution
- 11) Committee Quorum: a majority of the voting committee membership
- 12) Voting: All motions must be passed by a majority vote unless otherwise prescribed within this Constitution

## **Article II – Purpose and Responsibilities**

The Senate exists to represent the will of the student body. The Senate values community and strives to promote communication and collaboration between students, faculty, staff, and administrators while furthering policy interests of the student body. The responsibilities and procedures of the Senate shall be designated solely by this constitution and the bylaws passed pursuant to it.

- 1) The Senate shall follow and uphold all policies delineated in the “Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Judicial Procedures” section of the Gustavus Guide, as well as ensure and protect all rights of students listed in this section.
- 2) The Senate shall be knowledgeable of and subject to the “All-College Policies” listed in the Faculty Book and shall act in accordance with them.
- 3) The Senate shall be subject to and follow all local, state, and federal laws.

- 4) The Senate shall also recognize and protect the following rights:
  - a) The right of students to vote in any election or referendum conducted in accordance with this Constitution;
  - b) the right of students to participate in the formulation of policy concerning the education and welfare of the student body.
- 5) The Senate shall serve as the voice of the student body, acting as liaison and advocate for the interests of the student body to the College Administration, Board of Trustees, Faculty, and Staff.
- 6) The Senate shall review policies and procedures of the College and make student goals, concerns, and interests known to the College Administration during the formulation of College policy.
- 7) The funds collected from the student government fee shall be allocated to student organizations, student events, and items of special interest to the student body pursuant to this constitution and its bylaws.
  - a) The amount of the student government fee shall be set by the Budget Committee of the College, upon recommendation of the Senate. The Senate shall only recommend a fee increase after approval from the majority of students voting in a referendum.
  - b) Allocation of the funds collected is subject to the discretion of the Senate. Any student who feels that the Senate has allocated monies in a manner conflicting with this Constitution or its by-laws may file a complaint with the Senate Ombudsperson.

### **Article III – Composition**

The Senate shall be comprised of the following members who shall carry out the duties described in the by-laws. All members must be in good academic standing and full-time students, as defined by the Registrar. No member may be on academic or disciplinary probation while serving on Senate.

- 1) Cabinet: The voting membership of cabinet shall be the Co-Presidents, Chairs, and Senate Speaker. All non-voting executives, the Ombudsperson, and Co-Presidents Elect shall serve on the cabinet in a non-voting capacity. The cabinet is responsible for setting the agenda at all full Senate meetings as well as any other duties prescribed in the by-laws. No person may hold more than one cabinet position concurrently.
- 2) Co-Presidents: One Co-President will chair each full Senate meeting and will not vote. The other Co-President will only cast a vote to break a tie. Co-Presidents shall assume office at the end of the last full Senate meeting of the spring semester.
- 3) Co-Presidents Elect: Two students shall be elected in the spring semester as Co-Presidents prior to the academic year in which they will serve. Immediately following the election, the Co-Presidents Elect begin carrying out their duties prescribed in the by-laws. The Co-Presidents-Elect have full speaking privileges but no voting privileges and must resign from any other Senate positions.
- 4) Non-Voting Executives: The Co-Presidents shall appoint students, subject to confirmation by the Senate by a two-thirds vote of members present, to the following non-voting positions: Administrative Director, Technologies Director, Parliamentarian, Controller. These positions have full speaking privileges but no voting privileges.

- 5) Chairs: The Co-Presidents shall appoint students, subject to confirmation by the Senate by a two-thirds vote of members present, to the following Chair positions:
- a) Public Relations Chair
  - b) Finance Chair
  - c) Housing & Health Chair
  - d) Academic & Student Affairs Chair
  - e) Diversity Development Chair

In full Senate meetings, Chairs have full speaking privileges but do not have voting privileges. Chairs select members of committees and delegate tasks to Senators within their jurisdiction in accordance with this Constitution (Article VII) and in consultation with the Co-Presidents and Administrative Director.

- 6) Ombudsperson: At the first full Senate meeting in April, the Senate shall nominate and select an ombudsperson for the following year. The ombudsperson shall assume his or her position at the end of the last full Senate meeting of the academic year. This person shall ensure that Senate is functioning ethically and in accordance with its Constitution and by-laws.
- 7) Senate Speaker: At the first full Senate meeting of the academic year, the Senate shall nominate and select a Senate Speaker from its body to represent the Senate's interests on cabinet. This individual will retain all duties, rights, and responsibilities of a Senator.
- 8) Hall Senators: Hall Senators must be members of the constituency they represent when elected and for the duration of their term. The following Hall Senators shall be elected by their constituencies in the fall of every year to serve one-year terms.
- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| Arbor View Senator                            | Rundstrom Senator       |
| College View Senator                          | Sohre Senator           |
| Carlson International Senator                 | Southwest Senator       |
| Complex (North, Gibbs, Sorensen) Senators (2) | Uhler Senator           |
| Norelius Senators (2)                         | Off-Campus Senators (2) |
| Pittman Senator                               | ILS Senator             |
| Prairie View                                  |                         |
- 9) Class Senators: The following Class Senators shall be elected by their constituencies in the fall of every year to serve one-year terms:
- |                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| First-Year Senator | Junior Senator |
| Sophomore Senator  | Senior Senator |
- 9) International Senator: One senator shall be elected by the international students in the fall of every year to serve a one-year term. An international student is any student who does not hold United States citizenship.

**Article IV – Impeachment, Resignation, and Vacancies**

- 1) Impeachment: Any member of the Gustavus community has the right to bring a complaint to the Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson shall call a meeting of the ethics committee for an impeachment hearing if any member of Senate fails to perform his or her duties as outlined in the Constitution and by-laws. The committee shall hear the case and may recommend impeachment to the Senate with a majority vote. A vote of two-thirds of the full Senate is required to impeach a member. When a member is

impeached, he or she shall immediately be dismissed from office.

- 2) Resignation: In order to resign a member of Senate shall submit a letter in writing or via email to the Administrative Director who will announce the resignation at the next full Senate meeting. All resignations shall take effect immediately.
- 3) Mid-term vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the Senate. The ethics committee must publicize the opening to the appropriate constituency five days before the vacancy is to be filled.
- 4) In the event of a Co-Presidential vacancy, the remaining Co-President will nominate a student to fill the vacancy subject to confirmation by a super-majority of two-thirds of the full Senate.
- 5) In the event both Co-Presidential positions are vacant, the Senate Speaker shall fill the vacancy and nominate a student to the other Co-President position subject to Article IV, Section 4.

#### **Article V – Meetings**

- 1) The Senate must hold a retreat prior to the first full Senate meeting of the academic year. At the retreat, the Senate shall:
  - a) review the previous work of Senate;
  - b) learn the role and duties of a Senator;
  - b) establish goals for the upcoming year and create appropriate ad-hoc committees;
  - c) become familiarized with parliamentary procedure.
- 2) The full Senate shall convene weekly during the academic year, excluding breaks. The first meeting of the academic year will take place as prescribed in the by-laws. Meetings shall be limited to 120 minutes following the completion of community comment. Meetings may be extended by a majority vote of the Senate. An audio recording shall be made of all full Senate meetings.
- 3) The Cabinet shall convene weekly during the academic year, excluding breaks.
- 4) The Finance Committee shall convene weekly during the academic year, excluding breaks.
- 5) The Ethics Committee shall convene monthly during the academic year and as called by the Ombudsperson for the consideration of grievances.
- 6) Ad-hoc committees shall convene as needed by determination of the chair.
- 7) Proxies are not allowed.

#### **Article VI – Elections**

- 1) All elections must be carried out according to the stipulations and timelines set forth in the by-laws.
- 2) A fall election committee will be chaired by the Ombudsperson. The committee will include both Co-Presidents and two students-at-large.
- 3) The Ethics Committee shall be the Election Committee for the spring Co-Presidential election and any special referendums.

- 4) No member of the Election Committee may formally endorse any person running for any Senate position through oral, written, or electronic means.

### **Article VII – Committees**

The Senate shall have both standing and ad-hoc committees. Senators must serve on committees as outlined in the by-laws.

- 1) Ethics Committee: The primary purpose of the ethics committee is to see that the operations of Senate are carried out in an ethical manner in accordance with this Constitution, its by-laws, and College Policy. All Ethics Committee meetings shall be closed and all actions require the consent of a majority of the Committee's membership. The Ethics Committee shall be composed of:
  - c) Ombudsperson (Chair)
  - d) Parliamentarian
  - e) Senate Speaker
  - f) Two Senators
  - g) Student-at-large
  - h) Senate Advisor (adjunct, non-voting)
  - i) In the event a member of the committee has a conflict of interest with a specific issue, a Co-President will serve as that person's substitute for that specific issue.

The Ethics Committee shall:

- a) review the Constitution and its by-laws annually during the fall semester and make any recommendations for amendments to the full Senate;
  - b) upon discovery of any non-compliance with this constitution or the by-laws enacted pursuant to it submit a report to the campus judicial system;
  - c) administer the spring Co-Presidential election;
  - d) hear all ethics complaints.
- 2) Finance Committee: The purpose of the Finance Committee is to allocate the student government fee to student groups in their pursuit of quality activities and events that provide enrichment not only for themselves, but also, for the entire college community. Any member of Senate may attend Finance Committee meetings but the meetings shall be closed to the general public. The Finance Committee shall be composed of:
    - a) Finance Chair
    - b) Controller (vice-chair, non-voting)
    - c) Six members, at least four of whom must be Senators

The Finance Committee shall:

- a) review all student organization budget requests and forward them to the full Senate with a recommendation;
  - b) assist the Finance Chair with the yearly budgeting process;
  - c) review all mid-year allocation requests and forward them to the full Senate with a recommendation.
- 3) Ad-hoc Committees: Ad-hoc committees, created by the Senate with a majority vote, shall be created to address specific issues. A maximum of five Senators may serve on any ad-hoc committee and Senators must comprise the majority of all committees. The Chair of any ad-hoc committee may appoint students-at-large to serve on the committee with the approval of a majority of the committee.

### **Article VIII – Amendments to the Constitution**

- 1) Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed in either of the following manners:
  - a) Any voting member of the Senate may bring an amendment to the Senate for a vote. Consideration shall be granted by two-thirds of the Senate body via a roll call vote.
  - b) A petition bearing valid signatures of no less than ten percent of the student body shall be sufficient to grant consideration of any amendment.
- 2) Upon being granted consideration the Senate shall publicize the proposed amendment no later than two weeks before the proposed amendment is to be voted upon. A copy of the proposed amendment will also be submitted to the Dean of Students, Senate Adviser, Student Activities Office, and other relevant College offices.
- 3) The student body must ratify amendments to this Constitution by a majority of votes cast.
  - a) Referendums for constitutional amendments shall be brought before the student body during the Co-Presidential election in the spring semester.
  - b) A referendum may be held independently should the Senate deem it necessary by a two-thirds vote of members present.
  - c) The voting procedures for all referendums must adhere to the election procedures prescribed in the by-laws.
- 4) Amendments enacted shall be listed at the end of this constitution, and the original language of this constitution shall henceforth be preserved.

### **Article VIII – Supremacy**

This Constitution shall dictate the actions and operations of the Senate, superseding all by-laws. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the Senate in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution, by-laws, and any special rules of order the Senate may adopt.

A special body may be convened at the request of the Ombudsperson to be the final arbitrator of any disputes arising from this Constitution that cannot be rectified by Senate's Ethics Committee. The body will be convened by the campus judicial coordinator and shall consist of one college employee and two students. All decisions issued by the body shall be binding on the Senate.

### **Article IX – Bylaws**

- 1) The Senate may pass any bylaws it deems necessary and proper to accomplish the goals and facilitate the responsibilities set forth by this Constitution by two-thirds of the body via a roll call vote.
- 2) Any by-laws changes must be voted for consideration at the meeting after they are first presented
- 3) The Senate may amend bylaws enacted pursuant to this Constitution by a vote of two-thirds.

### **Article X – Stipends**

- 1) The Co-Presidents shall each receive a stipend of \$500 per semester.
- 2) The Finance Chair, Controller, and Technologies Director shall each receive stipends of \$250 per semester.
- 3) All stipends must be included in the Constitution.
- 4) Any adjustments to stipends will not take effect until the academic year following their enactment.