

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY
STUDENT SENATE CONSTITUTION

Revised: May 16, 2009

Preamble

We the undergraduate students of Lehigh University, in order to advance our own interests, define our responsibilities, and provide for representation of the student will, do hereby establish this constitution of the Lehigh University Student Association.

Article I: Name

The name of the governing body of the Lehigh University Student Association shall be the Lehigh University Student Senate. Elected representatives of the undergraduate population shall comprise the Lehigh University Student Senate.

Article II: Function

The function of the Student Senate shall be to provide an opportunity for its members to discuss and express their views upon any matter which they deem of general student interest and to make recommendations or pass resolutions with respect thereto. The Student Senate shall speak as the representative voice of the undergraduates on affairs of concern to the undergraduate community.

Article III: Elections

Section 1

Under this constitution, no student shall be eligible to hold any office unless the student qualifies as an undergraduate and will continue to be a full-time matriculating student during the entire term of his or her office.

Section 2

Elections of upper-class Senators will be held annually on consecutive weekdays approximately five weeks before the last day of classes in order to ensure ample time for two full Senate meetings. Elections for freshmen Senators will be held annually on consecutive weekdays within the first month of classes.

Section 3

In order to have a student's name placed upon the ballot, a petition of 20 signatures from the returning undergraduate student population, collected from members of the living unit the student will be representing, must be submitted to the Secretary of the Senate no later than two weeks prior to the date of the election.

Section 4

The seats reserved for freshmen representatives are to be elected by the regular Senate election process for freshman.

Section 5

If vacancies occur while Senate is in session during the regular academic year, they shall be filled in a manner that the Senate deems appropriate.

Section 6

The Senate shall establish election guidelines and/or committee(s) to handle the election.

Article IV: Representation

Section 1

The Student Senate shall be composed of 45 elected members. These members shall proportionally represent undergraduate living groups based upon population calculations as determined by the Vice-President. The apportionment of Senate seats to each living group shall be determined on an annual basis to reflect, as accurately as possible, the population calculations as determined by the Vice-President.

Section 2

Upon assignment to a specific constituency, each senator shall be required to communicate with the students in that constituency.

Article V: Executive Board

Section 1

The Executive Board shall be composed of the following executive officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian.

Section 2

The Executive Board shall meet at least biweekly while classes are in session. In order for the Executive Board to achieve a quorum, three (3) of the executive officers must be present, including either the President or the Vice President.

Section 3

The Executive Board shall help determine the direction and progress of the Senate toward its yearly goals, shall make appointments to all Senate committees subject to confirmation by the membership of the Senate, shall make appointments for the appointee positions, and shall set the agenda for each Senate meeting.

Article VI: Executive Officers

Section 1

The Student Senate shall have five executive officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian. In order to be eligible for the offices of President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, candidates for those offices must have served one prior term on the Student Senate. The Executive Board officers for each upcoming Senate term shall be elected from the membership of the Student Senate at the last full Senate meeting of the currently existing Senate and shall serve for a period of one year.

Section 2

The President shall be responsible for presiding over all full Senate meetings, shall be responsible for the execution of the Constitution, shall serve as the official spokesperson for the organization, shall serve as the chairperson for the University Life Improvements Committee, shall convene the Senate, and shall chair Executive Board meetings.

Section 3

The Vice President shall preside over Senate meetings, shall be an advisor and non-voting member of the Club Affairs Committee, shall oversee the workings of all Senate committees, shall chair Administration Board meetings, and shall assign members of the Senate to represent specific constituencies.

Section 4

The Treasurer shall serve as Chairperson of the Allocations Committee, shall report at each Senate meeting on the overall financial status of student organizations for which the committee has allocated funds, shall prepare records for the annual audit, and may appoint one or two Senators as Assistant Treasurers subject to confirmation by the Student Senate. The Treasurer may not serve on the executive board of any organization eligible to receive Student Senate allocated funding.

Section 5

The Secretary shall record the minutes of Senate meetings, shall maintain attendance records, shall enforce attendance requirements for full Senate meetings, constituency meetings, and committee meetings, and shall serve as a voting member of the Public Relations Committee.

Section 6

The Parliamentarian shall advise the Senate on matters relating to the Senate bylaws and constitution, shall explain and enforce the rules of order and conduct for proceedings of the Senate, and shall serve as chair and a voting member of the Bylaws Committee.

Article VII: Appointees

Section 1

Candidates for appointed positions shall be nominated by the seated Executive Board and confirmed by a majority vote of the membership of the Senate. After an appointee has been named, the appointee must then be presented to the full Senate and confirmed by a majority vote. If the nominee is not confirmed by a majority vote of the full Senate, the Executive Board must reconvene and appoint a different Senator to the position in question.

Section 2

A Communications Director shall exist to work in conjunction with the Executive Board to promote relations with other organizations on campus. The Communications Director shall serve as the Chairperson of the Public Relations Committee.

Section 3

A Technology Director shall serve as the Chairperson of the Technology Committee and shall exist to serve the technology needs of the Student Senate, including but not limited to maintaining the Student Senate website and managing other web projects.

Section 4

An Alumni Relations Director shall exist to facilitate communication with Student Senate alumni. The Alumni Relations Director shall also be responsible for updating and maintaining the alumni database.

Article VIII: Meetings

Section 1

The Student Senate shall meet biweekly while classes are in session.

Section 2

Meetings of the Student Senate shall be open to the public unless closed for purposes of discussion by a 2/3 vote of the membership of the Senate.

Section 3

In order to have quorum, 50% plus one of the seated Senate must be present.

Article IX: Committees

Section 1

The Student Senate shall be comprised of three (3) Standing Committees. A Standing Committee is an established group that is not dissolved at the end of the term. These three committees shall be the Allocations Committee, the Club Affairs Committee, and the Public Relations Committee.

Section 2

The Allocations Committee shall be chaired by the Treasurer. The Allocations Committee shall be comprised of eleven (11) Senators as appointed by the Executive Board, including two assistant treasurers, a policy treasurer and a finance treasurer, as well as an advisor appointed by the Dean of Students, but not including the Treasurer. The Allocations Committee shall establish a process for the submission and approval of budget requests by student organizations, establish guidelines for allocations, and allocate funds to recognized student organizations in accordance with the established guidelines for allocations.

Section 3

The Club Affairs Committee shall be chaired by a Senator elected from the membership of the Student Senate at the first meeting of the full Senate at the end of the spring semester and shall serve for a period of one year. The Club Affairs Committee shall be comprised of nine (9) Senators as appointed by the Executive Board, not including the Vice President, in addition to an advisor appointed by the Dean of Students. The Club Affairs Committee shall introduce legislation to the Senate recommending the approval or rejection of recognition of new student organizations. Legislation regarding recognition shall require a majority vote to be passed. The Club Affairs Committee shall be empowered to introduce legislation to the Senate to rescind recognition of existing organizations that shall require a 2/3 vote for to be passed. The Club Affairs Committee shall also be charged with overseeing the operations of all active clubs and organizations that are recognized by the Student Senate.

Section 4

The Public Relations Committee shall be chaired by the Communications Director and shall serve for a period of one year. The Public Relations Committee shall be comprised of Senators as appointed by the Executive Board. The Public Relations Committee shall publicize the activities of the Senate and its committees and maintain and improve communication and cooperation between the Senate, the undergraduate student body, and major student organizations.

Section 5

The Campus Life Improvement Promotion Committee shall be divided into two types of Standing Sub-Committees. Project Oriented Standing Sub-Committees, the number of which is to be determined by the Executive Board, and those Area Focused Standing Sub-Committees deemed necessary by the full Senate, all of which fall under the supervision of the Executive Board. The President of Student Senate shall chair the Campus Life Improvement Project Committee. The Committee shall have 4 voting members selected among all Standing Sub-Committee Chairpersons by a majority vote of all Standing Sub-Committee Chairpersons. The Campus Life Improvement Promotion Committee shall propose and facilitate action to improve the physical conditions of Lehigh University's campuses.

Section 6

Any Senator can establish an Ad-hoc Committee with approval granted by a majority vote of the membership of the Senate. An Ad-hoc Committee is a committee that is established to complete a specific goal and is dissolved after the goal has been achieved.

Article X: Parliamentary Authority

All Senate proceedings shall be in accordance with the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised except in cases in which the rules conflict with the Senate Constitution and/or Bylaws.

Article XI: Referenda

Section 1

A referendum shall be conducted by the Student Senate upon presentation to the Secretary of a petition containing the signatures of at least 20% of the undergraduate student body or upon the vote of the majority of Student Senate.

Section 2

The majority sentiment in a referendum is not binding upon the Student Senate.

Article XII: Removal from Office (Impeachment/Recall)

Section 1

Impeachment proceedings may be initiated by either a petition signed by 1/3 of the Senator's constituency or by a petition of 1/2 of the Senate. Immediately upon receipt of a petition, the Secretary will notify the Senator of the upcoming proceedings. Notification must occur at least 10 days prior to the meeting. The Senator must be given the opportunity to represent himself at the proceedings.

Section 2

Impeachment of officers of the Student Senate may be initiated by a petition signed by 2/3 of the Senate. Immediately upon receipt of a petition, the Secretary will notify the officer of the upcoming proceedings. Notification must occur at least 10 days prior to the meeting. The officer must be given the opportunity to supply personal representation at the proceedings. A ¾ vote of the seated Senate shall be necessary to remove the Senator from office. An impeached officer shall retain his Senate seat.

Section 3

A majority vote of the Senate shall be necessary to close the proceedings to the public. All votes related to impeachment shall be roll call votes, regardless of whether the meeting is open or closed.

Article XIII: Senator Assignment Board

The Senator Assignment Board shall consist of the five (5) constituency representatives and shall convene only if it becomes necessary during the course of the academic year to fill vacant Student Senate seats. The Vice-President shall serve as the non-voting chair of the Senator Assignment Board and shall reserve the right to select alternates as needed.

Article XIV: Bylaws Committee

The Bylaws Committee shall exist to discuss, draft, and propose potential changes to the Bylaws and/or Constitution as members of the Senate or current Executive Board see fit. The Committee shall consist of a chair, the Parliamentarian, as well as five (5) other members, one per constituency, as appointed by the Executive Board. The Bylaws Committee shall review and propose amendments to the Student Senate Bylaws and Constitution as well as on matters of constitutionality.

Article XV: Student Senate Judicial Board

The Student Senate Judicial Board (S.S.J.B.) shall exist to find liability and invoke consequences against clubs who violate the Student Senate Club Rules and Regulations. The S.S.J.B. shall consist of a chair elected by the membership of the Senate. The S.S.J.B. will consist of four Senators and two alternates appointed to the board after applying and partaking in an interview with the Executive Board and at least one Student Senate advisor. The Chairperson, appointed members, and alternates of the S.S.J.B. will be trained in judicial procedures by the Assistant Dean of Students for Judicial Affairs. The Student Senate Treasurer shall serve as an ex-officio member of the board if financial matters are concerned.

Article XV: Amendment

The Constitution of the Student Senate shall be considered for amendment provided the members of the Senate are given notice of the proposed amendment at least ten days prior to the first meeting at which the amendment is to be considered. Ten days must elapse before the Senate may vote on the amendment at a meeting that cannot be closed. A vote of ¾ of the seated Senate is necessary to amend the Constitution. The vote cannot be taken at the same meeting that the amendment is proposed.
