

Constitution and By-Laws of the Student Government Association of Columbia State Community College

Preamble

We, the students of Columbia State Community College, recognizing the dignity and honor in student government; realizing that an organization of the student body is necessary to preserve the rights of students in the governance of the college; desiring to protect our right to govern ourselves; and accepting responsibility for the quality of student life, do hereby set forth this Constitution of the Student Government Association of Columbia State Community College.

Article I: General

Section 1. Name

The name of the organization shall be the Student Government Association of Columbia State Community College. Hereinafter in this Constitution this organization shall be referred to as the SGA.

Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of the organization is :

- a. to promote the welfare of each Columbia State Student.
- b. to provide a training experience in the general principles of democratic government for elected SGA officials.
- c. to provide official channels through which student opinions may be expressed.
- d. to promote academic freedom and responsibility.
- e. to promote students rights and responsibilities.
- f. to promote full cooperation between students, faculty, and administration.
- g. to foster awareness of the student's position of elected SGA officials.
- h. to support all student body activities and school spirit.
- i. to nurture leadership potential of elected SGA officials.
- j. to control the assessment and allocation of the SGA student funding.
- k. to support all clubs and organizations within the college serving as a resource of information.
- l. to assist in the coordination of activities for the benefit of the entire student body and the college.

Section 3. Privileges

Any person who is currently registered for one or more classes during any given semester shall be deemed a student and shall be entitled to all the rights and benefits allowed under this Constitution and shall be entitled to vote in SGA elections.

Section 4. Organization

The SGA shall be organized into two branches; the executive and the legislative branch. Those powers which are executive shall be given to the president, vice president and secretary/treasurer. Those powers which are legislative shall be given to the senate. There shall also be one governor from each center/site. The center/site director shall appoint this position.

Therefore, the general assembly of the SGA consists of the following voting members:

- a. Secretary/Treasurer
- b. Senators

The president, vice president and governors are non-voting members of the general assembly.

The general assembly may be organized into the following joint committees:

- a. campus environment
- b. programs and activities
- c. special services
- d. off campus and evening services
- e. budget and finance
- f. public relations

A detailed description of the SGA organization and officers is provided in other articles of the Constitution.

Article II: Elections

Section 1. Qualifying for Office/Title

- a. All registered full-time students of Columbia State Community College who have a minimum cumulative 2.5 GPA are eligible to seek nomination for any office of the SGA subject to all rules and regulations as may be herein and hereafter enacted by the SGA, the college, or the Tennessee Board of Regents.
- b. First-term freshmen that wish to seek nomination for an office of the SGA must have a GED score of 45 or a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 and are permitted to run for the senate.
- c. An official, qualifying petition containing the required number signatures must be submitted to the student activities director

and certified by the student activities director before a student may campaign or seek an office of the SGA. Petitions must be submitted by the announced last date for qualifying and at least five school days prior to the first day of an official election.

- d. Write-in candidates are not permitted and any such votes shall not be counted.
- e. A person who has been impeached from an SGA office is ineligible to run for an SGA office.

Section 2. Election Schedule

- a. In the spring semester of each year, the SGA elections will be held to fill the offices of:
 - 1. President
 - 2. Vice President
 - 3. Secretary/Treasurer
 - 4. Five (5) Senators
- b. In the fall semester of each year, the SGA elections will be held to fill the offices of:
 - 1. Five (5) Senators
- c. Election polls shall be open during all hours in which classes are conducted at the Columbia campus and each center/site for one complete week beginning on Monday.
- d. Notice of election dates, hours and location must be publicized at least ten (10) school days prior to opening the polls for an official election.

Section 3. Voting

- a. Any person who is registered in one or more Columbia State classes will be deemed a student and will be eligible to vote in any SGA election.
- b. Voting is available to all currently enrolled students.
- c. "One currently enrolled student, one ballot" shall prevail during and SGA election.
- d. Students shall vote for individual candidates, not for a slate of candidates.

Section 4. Procedures

- a. An election commission comprised of the currently presiding SGA vice-president, one (1) senator and the Student Activities Director shall organize all SGA elections; and shall assume the following specific responsibilities:
 - 1. Ensure an objective election by not seeking any office or title which is open to a student body

election; by lending no support to any individual who may be seeking an office or title in a student body election; and by abstaining from taking a public stand for or against an issue that is scheduled to be decided by a student body vote.

2. Staff the election polls with faculty, staff, and or students who are not actively supporting and candidate for office or title, or w ho are not actively supporting and side of an issue or referendum that is scheduled to be decided by a vote of the student body.
 3. Monitor campaign activities to ensure compliance with campaign rules.
 4. Supervise election day activities to ensure a democratic process.
 5. Investigate all questions/protests related to the elections and recommend a response/follow-up action to the SGA.
 6. Oversee, with representation by the chairperson, the computer count of the ballots and certify results of the computer count.
 7. Submit certified election results to the Vice President for Student Services who shall announce the official results of the election within seventy-two (72) hours after the final hour of the second day closing of the polls.
 8. Disqualify any candidate who fails to adhere to campaign rules and/or violates election day rules.
- b. All offices/titles and referenda shall be determined by secret ballot of currently enrolled Columbia State students
1. The greatest number of votes for a candidate or referendum shall decide the winner or issue.
 2. In the event of a tie, a run-off election may be held with-in two weeks to determine a winner.
 3. In the event of a tie in the run-off election, the “voting membership” of the SGA may cast the deciding vote.
- c. No active campaigning shall be permitted within fifty (50) feet of the polling place on the days of elections.
- d. Active campaigning shall be permitted at off-campus centers and sites.

Article III: The Executive Branch

Section 1. General Authority and obligations

- a. All executive powers of the SGA shall be vested in a president who shall be assisted by the vice president and the secretary/treasurer in meeting the executive responsibilities of the SGA.
- b. Having been chosen by a plurality of the student body vote, the president, vice president and secretary/treasurer are to serve one term of office as long as the following conditions are met.
 - 1. The officer remains enrolled in on-campus day classes for a minimum of twelve (12) hours each semester of the term of office and maintains a cumulative GPA of 3.00.
 - 2. The personal behavior of the officer remains above reproach and in compliance with the rules and regulations governing student conduct, which are published, in the current student handbook.
 - 3. The officer remains active in SGA by regular and prompt attendance at all meetings of the executive branch and attendance at regularly scheduled meetings of the general assembly of the SGA.
- c. Executive officers will assume the responsibilities of their offices on the first day of summer semester, but are not required to take classes in the summer semester.
- d. Executive officers may seek re-election only once for a maximum of two (2) terms of office which may or may not be consecutive terms.
- e. Vacated positions in the executive branch shall be filled accordingly:
 - President- the vice-president shall assume this position as an interim president until the next general election for the student body to elect a new president.
 - Vice President- the senior senator shall assume this position as an interim vice-president until the next general election for the student body to elect a new vice-president.
 - Secretary/Treasurer- the general assembly shall elect a new secretary/treasurer by majority vote.

Section 2. President

- As the chief executive officer of the SGA, the president shall:
- a. Represent all currently enrolled on and off-campus Columbia State students with an earnest effort to seek input from and foster respect for all students irrespective of race, creed, color, age, gender, or other characteristics of diversity.

- b. See that all provisions of this Constitution are faithfully executed.
- c. Preside over all meetings of the executive branch of the SGA.
- d. Preside over regularly scheduled meetings of the general assembly of the SGA. Further the president:
 - 1. May waive the right to preside and may appoint a proxy to preside for a maximum of three (3) regularly scheduled meetings per semester.
 - 2. Should attend all called meetings of the senate.
- e. Have the power to fill vacated or vacant seats in the senate, with appointments that have been recommended by the SGA.
- f. Have the power to appoint committees to discharge official duties of the SGA.
- g. Have the power to appoint members to committees of the general assembly upon the recommendations by the senators, or to accept for appointment volunteers to serve on the committees.
- h. Be required to yield to questions from the senate.
- i. Have the power to veto legislation passed by the general assembly, however, the presidential veto may be overridden by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the general assembly.
- j. Have a time limit of seven (7) days to veto legislation passed by the general assembly. If the legislation is not approved or vetoed within the limit of seven (7) days, the legislation automatically becomes law without the president's signature. If the piece of legislation is on the president's desk and the semester ends before the seven (7) day limit is up, the piece of legislation must be tabled until the beginning of the next semester and must be presented, again, at the first regularly scheduled meeting of the general assembly for that semester.
- k. Serve as an ex-officio member of college standing committees and all committees of the general assembly of the SGA.
- l. Dedicate a minimum of ten (10) hours per week to the SGA office hours and business in exchange for a scholarship/grant.
- m. Recommend students to the president of the college for appointment to college standing committees.

Section 3. Vice-President

Sharing executive responsibility in faithfully executing the laws of the constitution, the vice-president shall:

- a. Assume primary responsibility for the orderly conduct of business during meetings of the general assembly of the SGA.
- b. Serve on the election commission of the SGA, observing all constitutional procedures relative to such service.
- c. Assume responsibilities for such duties as may be assigned by the president of SGA and for this constitution.

- d. Become the interim president of the SGA in the event the office of the president becomes vacant before the end of the president's term of office. As the interim president, the vice-president shall assume the authority and responsibilities of the presidency until the next general election is held for the student body to elect a new president. The interim president is eligible for the scholarship/grant if funds are available.
- e. Serve as an ex-officio member of all joint committees of the general assembly.

Section 4. Secretary/Treasurer

Sharing executive responsibility in faithfully executing the laws of this constitution, the secretary/treasurer shall:

- a. Record minutes of all meetings of the executive branch and general assembly of the SGA in a journal, taking roll call vote of the yea's and nay's on all business or legislation before either the executive or general body of the SGA.
- b. Report recorded minutes directly to the SGA and record all corrections to and/or adoption of the recorded minutes.
- c. Maintain a permanent file in the SGA office of all minutes, reports from committees, and amendments for a history to be preserved of SGA business.
- d. Assume other duties as assigned by the president of the SGA or this constitution

Article IV: The Legislative Branch

The Legislative Branch of the SGA shall consist of the senate and governors.

Section 1. General description, authority and responsibilities of the Senate.

- a. The members of the senate are elected by the student body or appointed by the president of the SGA to serve one term of office and are joined by other voting members of the SGA to form the general assembly.
- b. Members of the senate should meet regularly to draft and/or consider new bills and resolutions in the welfare of the student body. Specifically, the senate shall draft and present to the general assembly:
 - 1. Bills of law - amendments to the SGA constitution, or by-laws which are subject to the methods defined in Article VI of this constitution.
 - 2. Resolutions – declarations, appointments, programs, and expressions of sentiments of the general assembly, which are not subject to veto.

A majority vote of the general assembly is required to pass a law or reach a decision on any SGA business that is not otherwise assigned by the constitution.

- c. Elected and appointed members of the senate are to serve during the term of office as long as the following conditions are met:
 - 1. The member remains enrolled in a minimum of twelve (12) hours each semester of the term of office and maintains a cumulative GPA of 2.0.
 - 2. The personal behavior of the member remains above reproach and is in compliance with all rules and regulations governing student conduct published in the current student handbook.
 - 3. The member regularly attends meetings of the general assembly.
- d. A member of the senate may seek re-election or re-appointment only once for a maximum of two (2) terms which may or may not be consecutive terms.

Section 2. The Senate

- a. The senate shall be comprised of a maximum of ten (10) senators elected by a plurality of the student body and shall:
 - 1. Elect from among its members, a senior senator, who shall serve on the executive branch for one term of office.
 - 2. Compel the attendance of its members, censure or expel a member by majority vote if that member neglects senatorial duties or is absent more than three (3) times from a meeting of the general assembly during a semester.
 - 3. Assume other duties as delegated by the Executive Branch or president of the SGA.
 - 4. Recommend to the president of the SGA the appointment of students to fill the vacant or vacated seats in the senate.
- b. The senior senator shall:
 - 1. Recommend senators for general assembly committees
 - 2. Become the interim vice president of the SGA in the event the office of the vice president becomes vacant before the end of the vice president's term of office. As interim vice president, the senior senator shall assume the authority and responsibilities of the office of the vice presidency until the next general election is held for the student body to elect a new vice president.
 - 3. Assume other duties delegated by the president of the SGA or given by this constitution.

Section 3. The Governors

- a. The governors shall be comprised of one (1) representative from each center/site other than the Columbia campus and shall:
 1. Represent the students of each center/site
 2. Stay in contact with his/her appointed senator
 3. Remain enrolled in a minimum of twelve (12) hours each semester of the term of office and maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0.
 4. Remain in compliance with all rules and regulations governing student conduct published in the current student handbook.
 5. Not be required to attend meetings of the general assembly.
 6. Will be appointed by each center/site director

Article V: Impeachment

Section 1. Impeachable Offenses

- a. As student leaders, elected and appointed members of the SGA are required to exemplify the highest standards of ethics and conduct.
- b. Impeachable offenses shall include, but are not limited to:
 1. Neglect of duties
 2. Public, verbal, or physical attacks on others
 3. Obstruction of the orderly process of the SGA meetings or hearings
 4. Misrepresentation of the SGA
 5. Misuse of the authority of the SGA office
 6. Willful violation of the SGA constitution and/or by-laws
 7. Any violation of institutional policies, which are published in the Student Handbook

Section 2. Impeachment procedures

- a. Any student, faculty, staff, or administrator of Columbia State Community College may present to the general assembly of the SGA an article of impeachment against the SGA president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, or any elected or appointed member of the general assembly of the SGA.
- b. The general assembly may hear the complaint and vote to schedule an impeachment hearing within two (2) weeks of the date of the complaint or vote to dismiss the article of impeachment for lack of sufficient cause to further consider the complaint.
- c. The secretary/treasurer of the SGA must notify in writing the officer/member against whom the complaint has been brought,

- of the date, time, and place of a scheduled impeachment hearing.
- d. The impeachment hearing must be chaired by a student who is not an officer or voting member of the SGA and is appointed by the advisor of the SGA.
 - e. An audio or video tape recording must be made of the impeachment hearing.
 - f. The complainant must present evidence of or witness(es) to the alleged impeachable offense during the impeachment hearing.
 - g. The SGA officer/member against whom the impeachable offense has been brought should be given reasonable opportunity to refute the allegation(s) of an impeachable offense.
 - h. Members of the general assembly may raise reasonable questions with the complainant or the officer/member against whom the complaint has been brought.
 - i. The chairperson of the impeachment hearing shall maintain order during the hearing and shall call for a vote on the article of impeachment.
 - j. A final impeachment decision required two thirds (2/3) vote of the general assembly, excluding the vote of the officer/member against whom the complaint has been brought.

Article VI: Amendments and Resolutions

Section 1: General

- a. The president of Columbia State Community College and/or his/her designee are given authority by state legislation and the Tennessee Board of Regents to review and revise this constitution and by-laws to preserve the integrity of the institution and its educational environment.
- b. Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by a two thirds vote of the general assembly or by a referendum vote of the student body.
- c. Resolution may be presented by the senate to the house and adopted by a two thirds vote of the general assembly.

Section 2: Procedures

- a. Legislation may originate in the senate
- b. An amendment must first receive a majority vote by the members of the senate
- c. The amendment must secondly be presented in writing to the SGA secretary/treasurer who will prepare copies for distribution to the general assembly at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the SGA

- d. Reasonable time must be given for discussion of the proposed amendment after two (2) readings at two (2) meetings of the general assembly
 - 1. The general assembly may vote to place the proposed amendment as a referendum for a vote by the student body.
 - 2. A majority vote of the voting student body on the referendum will adopt the amendment.
- e. A two thirds vote by the general assembly on the proposed amendment is required before the piece of legislation is sent to the president for approval and adoption. The president may veto the legislation and return it to the house from which it originated stating reasons for the presidential veto.
- f. A three fourths vote of the general assembly will override the presidential veto giving adoption to the amendment.
- g. Any amendment adopted to this constitution shall become effective thirty (30) days after being signed by the president, passed by override of the general assembly or endorsed by the majority vote of the student body in the referendum vote.
- h. The secretary/treasurer shall record the amendments in the body of the constitution rather than attaching a chronological listing of the amendments in the constitution. A copy of the proposed amendment with a record of action taken by the general assembly on each reading, action taken by the president or referendum vote and/or override action should be kept with the permanent records of the Student Government Association of Columbia State Community College.