STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION

Approved by Senate: November 2013 | Ratified by Student Body: February 2014
Amended 11/04/13

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PREAMBLE
We, the students of Valdosta State University (VSU), in order to form a democratic, efficient, and responsible student government; to represent, lead, and unify the student body, to decide and act responsibly for the students’ interest, and to work with the Faculty, Staff, and Administration of the university in the pursuit of our mutual interest, do hereby establish the Student Government Association of VSU and adopt this Constitution.

The Student Government Association applies only to the internal governance of the SGA. If any part of the SGA Constitution conflicts with Board of Regents (BOR), University Systems of Georgia (USG) and or VSU policies and procedures; then BOR, USG, and VSU policies and procedures will be adhered to.
ARTICLE I: THE ORGANIZATION

Section 1: Name
A. The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association, hereinafter referred to as the “SGA,” of Valdosta State University, hereinafter referred to as the “VSU.”

Section 2: Membership
A. All students, by virtue of their enrollment at VSU, hereinafter referred to as “the student body,” shall be subject to this Constitution, the SGA By-Laws, the Student Body Statutes, and the University Code of Conduct as it appears in the VSU Student Handbook.
   1. The right to vote in any student body election or referendum shall not be denied to any currently enrolled VSU student.
   2. All students shall be subject to the rules and regulations of the university, but these rules shall at no time and in no way abridge the students’ rights as defined under the Constitution of the United States of America or of the state of Georgia.
B. Non-Discrimination & Diversity Policy
   Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, shall be extended to all students without regard to age, ethnicity, gender, disability, color, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or sex and gender identity.

Section 3: Purpose
A. The purpose of the SGA shall be to represent and voice the concerns of all students of VSU in all university matters, while creating legislation and developing programs and activities of practical value to the student body.

Section 4: Branches of Government
A. The SGA shall be divided into three branches: the Legislative Branch, the Executive Branch, and the Judicial Branch.
B. No power or authority belonging to one branch shall be applied to either of the other branches unless otherwise stated in this Constitution.

ARTICLE II: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Section 1: Powers of the Legislative Branch
A. All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Senate. The Senate shall formulate such policies, regulations, and recommendations that shall relate to the student body. The specific powers and responsibilities of the Senate are as follows:
   1. The Senate shall have the power to make recommendations on issues relevant to the general welfare of the student body including, but not limited to, student conduct regulations.
   2. The Senate shall have the power to make statutes governing the operations of the SGA.
B. Voting
   1. The Senate member must be present in order to vote on any item or issue; there shall be no voting by proxy.
   2. A quorum of the Senate shall be considered two-thirds of all members of the Senate on roll and must be present in order to conduct official business.
3. The Senate shall have the power to override an SGA Presidential veto on any statute or recommendation by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Senate.

C. Appointment
   1. The Senate shall approve any of the SGA President’s appointees by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present.

D. Impeachment
   1. The Senate may, by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Senate, bring charges of impeachment against any SGA Executive Officer, Senator, or Justice.
   2. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of the entire voting membership of the Senate is required to remove any SGA Executive Officer, Senator, or Justice after a recommendation of impeachment has been approved by the Senate.
   3. The Senate has no power of impeachment against Executive Cabinet members. It is the sole power of the President of the SGA to remove his/her executive cabinet appointees after confirmation from the Senate.

Section 2: Apportionment
   A. General Appointment: The Senate shall consist of fifty (50) seats, numbered one (1) through fifty (50), with one (1) Senator occupying each seat.
   B. Special Provisions:
      1. Seats numbered one (1) through ten (10) shall only be occupied by a qualified student in the freshman class, with 0-29 completed credit hours.
      2. Seats numbered eleven (11) through fifteen (15) shall only be occupied by a qualified student in the sophomore class, with 30-59 completed credit hours.
      3. Seats numbered sixteen (16) through twenty (20) shall only be occupied by a qualified student in the junior class, with 60-89 completed credit hours.
      4. Seats numbered twenty-one (21) through twenty-five (25) shall only be occupied by a qualified student in the senior class, with 90+ completed credit hours.
      5. Seats numbered twenty-six (26) through thirty (30) shall only be occupied by a qualified graduate student.
      6. Seats numbered thirty-one (31) through fifty (50) are open to all students qualified under the Elections Code of the SGA By-Laws.

Section 3: Terms and Qualification of the Senate
   A. Members of the Senate may not: be a member of the SGA Judicial Council, the manager or managing editor of any campus communication funded by student activity fees, or hold any executive position in the SGA unless otherwise stated in this Constitution.
   B. Every Senator shall be required to take the oath of office as administered by the Chief Justice or his/her designee of the Judicial Council, or any other appointed Judicial Council member approved by the Senate.
   C. The term of office shall run from one SGA election to the next corresponding election, as prescribed by the Elections Code of the SGA By-Laws.

Section 4: Senate Vacancies
   A. Any vacant seat in the Senate to be filled shall be announced by the presiding officer of the Senate within one week of its occurrence.
   B. Any Senator may suggest nominations from the floor to fill any Senate vacancy. The matter shall be tabled for one week for consideration, before the winner is decided.
C. All nominees to fill vacant seats must meet all requirements to hold office as prescribed in the Elections Code of SGA By-Laws.

D. No person may be nominated or elected to the Senate if that person has served in the Senate or on the Executive Board within the semester of his/her nomination, unless otherwise approved by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present.

E. Persons wishing to be nominated, in order to fill a vacant seat within the Senate, must attend two consecutive meetings of the Senate before receiving a nomination.

F. The Legislative Branch may fill any Senate seat left vacant after the annual fall and spring elections.

G. The Executive Branch has the authority to require an application process for senate seat vacancies as deemed appropriate.

Section 5: Officers of the Senate

A. Officers of the Senate shall be: the SGA Vice President, President Pro-Tempore, and Parliamentarian. The President Pro-Tempore and Parliamentarian shall be appointed and confirmed by the Senate membership by majority vote (50%+1) of the Senate that is present, at the opening meeting following the fall elections.

B. The following duties and powers shall be vested in the office of the President of the Senate:

1. Shall be the Vice President of the SGA, who shall preside over and conduct all meetings of the Senate, unless otherwise approved by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present, in concordance with this Constitution, the SGA By-Laws, and the rules adopted by the Senate.

2. Shall appoint members to any Senate committee.

3. Shall hold regularly scheduled meetings with the chairpersons of the SGA committees of the Senate in order to assist the SGA President in the execution of all actions taken by the SGA Senate.

4. May, in case of a tie, vote on any measure before the Senate.

C. The following duties shall be vested in the office of the President Pro-Tempore of the Senate:

1. Shall perform all the duties of the presiding officer in the absence of the President of the Senate.

2. Shall perform the duties and responsibilities as an Executive cabinet member outlined in the SGA By-laws.

3. Shall be a voting member of the Senate, with all rights and privileges thereof during the regular session of the Senate in which the Vice President is present.

D. The following duties shall be vested in the office of the Senate Parliamentarian:

1. Shall act as an advisor to the presiding officer on matters of parliamentary procedure.

2. Shall perform the duties and responsibilities as an Executive cabinet member outlined in the SGA By-laws.

3. Shall maintain a position of impartiality when deemed necessary.

Section 6: Meetings of the Senate

A. The Senate shall assemble weekly throughout the semester with the exception of the summer semester. During summer semester, the Senate shall meet whenever necessary.

B. All meetings of the SGA shall be open to all members of the University community.
Section 7: Committees of the Senate
A. The committees of the Senate and their duties shall be defined in the SGA By-Laws.

Section 8: Establishment of By-Laws
A. The By-Laws of the SGA shall be established by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present. The By-Laws shall be maintained by Legislative Affairs committee of the SGA in collaboration with the Executive Board.

Section 9: SGA Code of Conduct
A. A code of conduct may be established by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present, and reviewed yearly by the Legislative Affairs and Judiciary committees.
B. Changes to the Code of Conduct are subject to approval by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present.
C. The code of conduct shall be maintained by the Vice President and President Pro Tempore of the SGA.

ARTICLE III: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Section 1: Composition
A. The Executive Branch of the SGA shall consist of the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Comptroller.
B. The purpose of the Executive Branch shall be to supervise, maintain, and advise on policies, regulations, and recommendations that are formulated by the Legislative Branch in the interest, convenience and necessity of the student body.
C. The Executive Branch will initiate and maintain projects of interest for the students, which have been approved through the proper channels and shall recommend to the Legislative Branch any legislation deemed necessary.

Section 2: Qualifications of the Executive Board
The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Comptroller:
A. Shall be an enrolled student in good standing at the university at the time of election and maintain that standing throughout their term of office.
B. Shall hold office from May 1 until April 30 of the following calendar year, and be elected by the voting student body as prescribed in the Election Code the SGA By-Laws.
C. Shall not be a member of the SGA Judicial Council, the Campus Activities Board, or the manager or managing editor of any campus communications funded by student activity fees.
D. Shall not hold a position in the Legislative Branch during their term of office, unless specifically authorized by this Constitution.
E. Shall be required to take the oath of office as administered by the University President, the Chief Justice or his/her designee of the Judicial Branch, or any other appointed judiciary member approved by the Senate.

Section 3: Duties of the SGA President
A. Shall serve as the liaison between students, faculty, staff, administration, and the community.
B. Shall execute, supervise, and maintain all such policies, regulations, and recommendations as formulated by the Legislative Branch.
C. Shall represent the students of VSU at official university functions.
D. Shall appoint, upon concurrence of a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present, members to committees and councils of the university as requested by the Faculty, Staff and Administration.

E. Shall have the power to call a special session of the Senate, shall be an ex officio member of all boards and committees of the SGA excluding those of the Legislative Branch, and shall see that all actions taken by the Senate are executed.

F. Shall in the fall and spring semester call a joint meeting of all divisions of the SGA at which time the President shall report on the State of the Association.

G. Shall serve as the University delegate to the Student Advisory Council of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and shall have the authority to appoint Student Advisory Council delegate(s).

H. May be appointed to any standing university committee or board other than those of the SGA, or may appoint a representative to serve in such capacity.

I. May remove from office any Presidential appointee to the Executive Cabinet.

J. May veto within one week of passage, any recommendation or statute of the Senate, but may be over-ridden by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Senate.

1. The power of vetoing any measure by the SGA Senate before its passage and before its acceptance by the student body, in part or as a whole, is solely vested in the Office of the SGA President.

2. Any bill passed by the Senate must be approved by the President within ten (10) days of its passage.

3. All bills that are approved by the Senate and sanctioned by the President will be signed with the President’s signature to signify acceptance of the bill.

4. Any bill not approved by the President within the allotted ten (10) day period shall be null and void.

Section 4: Duties of the SGA Vice President
A. Shall serve as the presiding officer and President of the Senate and oversee all internal operations of the organization.

B. Shall hold regularly scheduled meetings with the student-held seats on the university committees and boards and regularly report such meetings to the Senate.

C. Shall ensure that academic verifications of grade point averages of all of the members of SGA are conducted at the beginning of each semester to ensure all individuals are qualified.

D. Shall coordinate supply orders and event reservations on behalf of the SGA.

E. Shall serve in any capacity that will assist the SGA President in the execution of all actions taken by the SGA.

F. Shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the President shall transfer to the Vice President in the event that the President of the SGA is vacated for any reason.

G. Shall assume any duties that may be delegated by the President.

Section 5: Duties of the SGA Secretary
A. Shall be the recorder of the Senate, unless deemed otherwise by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate that is present, and will assume any other duties delegated by the presiding officer of the Senate.

B. Shall maintain attendance records of Senate members and guests to meetings.
C. Shall organize all business to be conducted on the Senate meeting agendas and disseminate in a timely fashion.
D. Shall disseminate Senate meeting minutes to all members of the Senate as well as the student body through the designated communication channels in a timely fashion.
E. Shall compile reports from committees and Executive cabinet and board members.
F. Shall be responsible for dispatching all legislation requiring executive action to the President of the SGA.
G. Shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining all records and files that pertain to the SGA.
H. Shall assume any duties that may be delegated by the President and Vice President.

Section 6: Duties of the SGA Comptroller
A. Shall supervise the proper expenditure of all monies of the SGA and shall give a monthly report on these expenditures to the Senate.
B. Shall maintain records of all business transactions which involve funds of the SGA.
C. Shall have the responsibility of informing the members of the SGA of all actions taken by the university that involve the use of funds derived from the members of the SGA.
D. Shall be responsible for the preparation of the budget for the SGA funds.
E. Shall oversee and delegate duties of the SGA Finance & Civic Service committee operations.
F. Shall monitor the business conducted by the Planning and Budget Council of the University.
G. Shall assume any other duties delegated by the President and Vice President.

Section 7: Executive Board Vacancies
A. In a case where all Executive Board positions become vacant, SGA committee chairpersons shall fill the Executive Board with the respective positions to be determined by the Judicial Branch in coordination with the Dean of Students office.
   1. If the President of the SGA is vacated, the Vice President as prescribed in the SGA Constitution and Bylaws shall assume the duties of the President and be sworn in by Chief Justice the next immediate Senate meeting. The office of the Vice President shall then be considered vacant.
   2. If the Vice President of the SGA is vacated, the President Pro Tempore, as prescribed in the SGA Constitution and By-laws, must relinquish his/her position as Senator in order to assume the office of SGA Vice President. If the President Pro Tempore is unable to serve, the Legislative Affairs Committee Chairperson, or its equivalent shall assume the duties of the SGA Vice President.
   3. If the Secretary of the SGA is vacated, the chairperson of the Public Relations Committee, as prescribed in the SGA By-Laws, or its equivalent shall assume the duties of the SGA Secretary and must relinquish his/her position as Senator in order to assume the office of SGA Secretary.
   4. If the Comptroller of the SGA is vacated, the chairperson of the Senate Finance & Civic Service Committee, as prescribed in the SGA By-Laws, or its equivalent shall assume the duties of the Comptroller of the SGA and must relinquish his/her position as Senator to assume the Office of SGA Comptroller.
   5. Those appointed to fill a vacant seat on the Executive Board shall be approved by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Senate.
ARTICLE IV: JUDICIAL BRANCH

Section 1: Responsibilities
A. Shall be vested the judicial powers of the student body within the Judicial Branch through one prominent body, the Judicial Council, and such lesser councils as may from time to time be ordained.
B. Shall promote fairness, equality, and justice to all members of the student body.
C. Shall be subject to this Constitution, VSU Student Code of Conduct, and the Code of Ethics established by the Assistant Dean of Students for Student Conduct and the Chief Justice.
D. Shall make written recommendations to the Student Conduct Office and Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students on all hearings.

Section 2: Composition
A. The Judicial Council shall be composed of eleven members appointed by the President of the SGA in conjunction with the Assistant Dean of Students for Student Conduct and with the advice and consent of a two thirds (2/3) of the Senate that is present.
B. The Judicial Council will be presided over by a Chief Justice who shall yearly be elected from and by the eleven members of the Council.
C. The Chief Justice, in conjunction with the Assistant Dean of Students for Student Conduct and/or the Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students, shall have the power to set the time and place of meetings of all lesser councils as the need arises.
D. Any Judicial member shall have the power to administer the oath of office to the members of the Legislative and Executive Branches as well as to all members of the SGA Judicial Council, and such lesser councils as may from time to time be ordained.
E. The Judicial Council shall select one of its eleven members to serve as Associate Chief Justice. The Associate Chief Justice shall maintain a record of all proceedings and serve in the role of Chief Justice in his/her absence.
F. The specific rules, procedures, and duties of the Judicial Council shall be found in the VSU Student Code of Conduct.
G. All members of the Judicial Council shall be an enrolled student in good standing at the university at the time of appointment to the Judicial Branch, and must maintain that standing throughout their entire tenure of service.
H. All members of the Judicial Council shall serve on the Council until such time as the member decides to resign, fails to maintain good standing at the university, or is removed from service by impeachment.
I. No member shall serve as a member of the Executive or Legislative Branches, or be manager or managing editor of any campus communications funded by student activity fees.

Section 3: Powers
A. The Judicial Council shall have jurisdiction and powers as described by the Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students.
B. The constitutional and empowered jurisdiction shall include the following:
   1. Violations of all rules, regulations, and policies governing individual student conduct and student organizations.
   2. All sections of the Executive Branch of the SGA.
   3. Sole power of interpretation of the Constitution, Statues, and Bylaws of the SGA.
4. All conflict which arises between officially registered student organizations.
5. Offenses against this Constitution and the SGA By-laws.

D. The Judicial Council, in conjunction with the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students may, at its discretion, review any case involving members of the SGA.

E. The Judicial Council shall have the right to summon any member of the student body, Faculty, Staff, or Administration of VSU, to testify either on behalf of or against the accused at the request of the parties involved before any council of the Judicial Branch.

Section 4: History
A complete record of all actions on hearings shall be maintained by the Judicial Council and Student Conduct Office. This record shall be made available to the student involved upon written request by the student.

Section 5: Appeals
The right to appeal any recommendation or ruling by the Judicial Council shall not be denied to any student or student organization by this Constitution. The Judicial Council shall be the student body’s highest appellate authority over all student organizations registered by the Student Life Office.

Section 6: Right to an Advisor
The right to an advisor, either lay or professional, shall not be denied to any student or student organization by this Constitution.

Section 7: Double Jeopardy
A. A student or organization that appears before the Judicial Council shall not be under the threat of double jeopardy when cleared of charges by the Judicial Council.

B. Any charges against a student or organization by a group or an individual shall not be held against the student or student organization that has already been found not responsible of the same charges.

C. The ruling of the Judicial Council is the final authority on this Constitution.

D. All other rulings will be subject to the appeals process as found in the VSU Student Handbook’s Code of Conduct.

ARTICLE V: FINANCES

A. The right of the SGA to control its financial resources and any disbursement is a right of the organization. It is the life of the SGA, and rightfully belongs to the students in a representative and democratic government. No one shall have the authority to delegate away this right.

B. Federal Law, the state of Georgia and its agencies, and the BOR of the state of Georgia shall have the only recognized authority to restrain this right.

C. All financial actions taken by the SGA must follow the appropriate policies and procedures established by VSU, USG, and the Georgia Department of Administrative Services (DOAS).

ARTICLE VI: IMPEACHMENT

Section 1: Power of Impeachment
A. The Senate shall have the sole power to hear all actions of impeachment against any official of the SGA. Any branch of the SGA may institute impeachment proceedings against any of its members.
B. Impeachment proceedings must be submitted to the Senate, which has the sole power of impeachment.
C. When sitting for the purpose of impeachment, the Senate as a whole shall be under oath.
D. No member shall be impeached without a three-fourths (3/4) concurrence of the entire voting membership of the Senate.
E. Judgment in the cases of impeachment shall extend to removal from office and disqualification to hold any office in the SGA until the next regular election.

Section 2: Rights of Impeachment
A. Any person impeached by the Senate may appeal to the Judicial Council.
B. To reverse impeachment, a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the Judicial Council is required.
C. If the Judicial Council is unable to reach a decision, for whatever reason, the verdict of the Senate shall stand.
D. The decision of the Judicial Council is the final word on impeachment.

ARTICLE VIII: DUE COMPENSATION
A. The members of the Executive Branch of the SGA shall receive due compensation for their services, which shall not increase or decrease during their term of office as recommended by the Student Activity Fee Allocation Committee.

ARTICLE IX: LEGISLATION

Section 1: Resolutions
A. Shall be drafted to express an official position of the Senate on behalf of the student body.
B. Shall be submitted to the Legislative Affairs committee for semantic revision before appearing before the Senate.
C. Shall require one reading at a Senate meeting. The Vice President shall entertain debate and amendment, and the Senate will voted on the proposed resolution.
D. Shall require a majority vote (50%+1) of the Senate present at time of presentation.

Section 2: Bills
A. Shall be drafted to alter any code or other governing document other than the Constitution.
B. Shall be submitted to the Legislative Affairs committee for semantic revision before appearing before the Senate.
C. Shall require one reading at a Senate meeting. Upon the first reading, the Vice President shall entertain debate and amendment, and the Senate will vote on the proposed bill.
D. Shall require a two-thirds vote of the Senate present at the time of presentation.

Section 3: Amendments
A. Shall be drafted to make deletions or insertions to the Constitution or Bylaws.
B. Shall be submitted to the Legislative Affairs committee doe semantic revision before appearing in front of the Senate.
C. Shall require a first and second reading at a Senate meeting. Upon first reading, the Vice President, shall not entertain debate. At least one week shall transpire between the first and second reading. Upon second reading, the Vice President shall entertain debate and amendment, and the Senate will vote on the proposed amendment.
D. Shall require a two-thirds vote of the Senate.
E. Shall be approved by the Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students for review and commentary or shall take effect one week after being delivered to the Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students.

**ARTICLE X: CONSTITUTIONAL RATIFICATION**

**Section 1: Constitutional Amendment**
Amendments or revisions to this Constitution shall require approval by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Senate.

**Section 2: Constitutional Approval**
This Constitution shall take effect when approved by the voting majority of the student body via referendum.

**Section 3: Constitutional Supremacy**
Upon ratification, this Constitution and its associated documents shall supersede all previous governing documents, which shall be deemed null and void.
We the undersigned below declare that this Constitution for the Student Government Association of Valdosta State University has been passed by the Student Government Association and ratified by the Student Body of Valdosta State University. We also declare our intent to achieve even better representation of the Student Body of Valdosta State University by the passage and ratification of the Constitution. This, we declare, on the 10th day of February in the year 2014.

[Signatures]

President of SGA

Vice President of SGA

Comptroller of SGA

Parliamentarian of SGA

Chief Justice of Judicial Board

Chair of Legislative Affairs

Chair of Civic Service and Finance

Chair of Student Affairs

Chair of Public Relations

Chair of Safety and Security

Chair of Health Services

Chair of Judiciary Committee

Advisor to SGA

Advisor to SGA

Advisor to SGA
15. Finally, please review the attachments below and vote to ratify the new 
Student Government Association Constitution approved by the Senate on October 
28, 2013 and approved via amendment on November 4, 2013. Constitution final 
110413 amendment Constitution rough draft 101813 quick reference guide By 
laws final 110413 amendment By laws rough draft 101813 quick reference guide

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