

# **Constitution of the University of Mary Washington Student Government Association**

## **Article I. NAME**

The name of this organization will be the University of Mary Washington Student Government Association (UMW SGA).

## **Article II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the SGA shall be to work for a better University community through the development and strengthening of individual responsibility and citizenship. The SGA shall provide the channel through which student voices and concerns can be heard and shared with the faculty, staff, and administration. The SGA shall also have the obligation to instill the principles of self-government and representative democracy in every student. The SGA will monitor their affiliate organizations to ensure compliance. All affiliate organizations of the SGA are part of the SGA Advisory Board.

## **Article III. MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. Upon matriculation into the University, every student is entitled an equal voice and fair representation by the SGA. All students holding elected and appointed SGA positions shall maintain good school standing as defined by the Dean of Student Life and the Student Handbook.

Section 2. Membership in the SGA shall be open to any interested undergraduate students, both fulltime and part-time.

Section 3. The SGA shall not discriminate against, nor tolerate any discrimination of any member of the University of Mary Washington community on the basis of race, color, religion, physical or mental disability, national origin, political affiliation, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, or age.

## **Article IV. AUTHORITY**

Section 1. The elected representatives of the SGA shall have the sole authority to act in the name of the student body and are the highest elected student officers on campus. Members of the SGA shall have the responsibility to study any matter affecting the welfare of the student body and the University and make recommendations which will foster their best interests.

Section 2. The Executive and Legislative branches comprise the governing bodies of the SGA.

Section 3. The SGA shall also serve as an advisory body to the President of the University. The SGA advisor will be appointed by the Vice-President of Student Affairs.

## **Article V. EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

Section 1. The Executive Branch of the SGA holds all executive power under the direction of the SGA President.

- a. The Executive Branch of the SGA is composed of the President, Vice President, President's Staff, and the SGA Advisory Board.
- b. The elected members of the Executive Branch include the: President of the SGA and Vice President of the SGA. Their term of office shall last from the Transition Ceremony at the end of the academic year when they are elected, until the Transition Ceremony at the end of their year of service.
  - i. Elected members must be re-elected every year in order to serve in the same position.
- c. The appointed members of the Executive Branch, also known as the President's Staff, include the: Director of Administration, Director of Communications, Director of Finances, and President's Secretary.
  - i. The President's Staff shall attend all meetings stipulated by the SGA President with a full voice and no voting privileges.
  - ii. The President's Staff shall complete any task assigned to them by the SGA President.

Section 2. The duties of the President shall include:

- a. Formulating, organizing, and clearly stating in writing the goals of the SGA under their administration for the upcoming academic year. These goals must be presented to the current SGA Senate at the beginning of each Fall Semester and published to the student body.
- b. Serving as the chief spokesperson for the SGA and the student body in all matters deemed necessary and proper.
- c. Calling and presiding over all meetings of the SGA Advisory Board as well as any open student body meeting as requested.
- d. Appointing the SGA Director of Administration, Director of Communications, Director of Finances, and President's Secretary, with the consent of the Senate Elections and Appointments Committee.

- e. Nominating students to serve on any applicable student/faculty committees as official SGA representatives. This does not include SGA Senate committees.
- f. Being responsible to the President of the University and acting as a liaison for the SGA and student body to the Board of Visitors.
- g. Being responsible for the efficient operation of the daily activities of the SGA and having the authority to regulate all SGA activities.

Section 3. The duties of the Vice President shall include:

- a. Acting as the President of the SGA Senate, and, in the case of their absence or removal, as the SGA President.
- b. Calling and presiding over all Senate meetings, voting only in a tie situation.
- c. Appointing the Senate Secretary and Parliamentarian and choosing all chairpersons of any ad-hoc committees with the Senate's consent.
- d. Ensuring the efficient daily operations of the Senate, including providing oversight of the elected committee chairs.
- e. Attending all SGA Advisory Board meetings and accepting concerns for Senate consideration.

Section 4. The duties of the Director of Administration shall include:

- a. Being responsible for planning and coordinating all SGA events and programs along with assisting the endeavors undertaken by other members of the SGA.
- b. Assisting the SGA President in administering the day-to day operations and responsibilities of the SGA. This includes, but is not limited to, organization, scheduling, data collection, and form completion.

Section 5. The duties of the Director of Communications shall include:

- a. Aiding the SGA President on matters concerning the communications of SGA projects, initiatives, and news to the University and local communities, in addition to assisting in the execution and promotion of events.
- b. Frequently consulting with and assisting the Senate Community Relations and University Relations Committees on all relevant matters.
- c. Maintaining and administering all SGA websites, official email accounts, social media accounts, and internal communication systems, as well as any other digital technology needs the SGA may have or require in the future.

Section 6. The duties of the Director of Finances shall include:

- a. Being responsible for the effective, timely, and accurate bookkeeping of all monetary transactions, including funds requested from, and provided by, the Finance Committee and the UMW Foundation.
- b. Serving as the liaison between SGA and Finance Committee and should accurately reflect any concerns of each body to the other.
- c. Being able to provide an accurate running balance of applicable SGA accounts upon a reasonable request by any member of the student body.

Section 7. The duties of the President's Secretary shall include:

- a. Accurately recording and upkeep of all meeting minutes and notes as assigned by the SGA President. This includes, but is not limited to, SGA Advisory Board meetings.
- b. Efficiently archiving all documents, minutes, notes, and other data of the SGA. They will work with the Director of Administration and Director of Communications to organize and make public such materials.

Section 8. The SGA Advisory Board

The SGA Advisory Board is a body comprised by representatives of the student organizations listed below. The Board will advise the SGA President on student issues and proposed bills from the SGA Senate, with each representing the interests of their specific population. The Board shall meet at least bi-weekly (once every two weeks) at a date and time agreed upon by all members.

Sub-section 1.

- a. Association of Residence Halls (ARH)
  - i. The ARH President or their designee shall be the official representative to the SGA in all matters relating to on-campus residential students.
- b. Campus Programming Board (CPB)
  - i. The President or their designee shall be the official representative to the SGA in all matters relating to campus events and programming.
- c. Club Sports and Recreation (CSR)
  - i. The CSR President or their designee shall be the official representative to the SGA in all matters relating to club-level athletics and student recreation.
- d. Honor Council
  - i. The Honor Council President or their designee shall be the official representative to the SGA in all matters relating to the Honor System and Honor Code.
- e. Inter-Club Association (ICA)
  - i. The ICA President or their designee shall be the official representative to the SGA in all matters relating to student clubs and extracurricular organizations.

- f. Off-Campus Student Association (OCSA)
  - i. The OSCA President or their designee shall be the official representative to the SGA in all matters relating to off-campus/commuter students.
- g. Student Athletic Advisory Council (SAAC)
  - i. The SAAC President or their designee shall be the official representative to the SGA in all matters relating to varsity athletics.
- h. Student Conduct Review Board (SCRB)
  - i. The SCRB President or their designee shall be the official representative to the SGA in all matters relating to student conduct and judicial affairs.

Sub-section 2. The SGA Advisory Board will review all bills and each representative will offer a formal recommendation, either in favor or not in favor of a bill. Recommendations will then be submitted to the SGA President for their approval or veto.

- a. In the case of a veto in contradiction to a simple majority of favorable recommendations, such recommendations and their reasonings shall be made available to the Senate in the case that the body wishes to overturn a veto or restructure the bill.
- b. In the case of a bill passed by the Senate and SGA President but a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority of the Advisory Board issues recommendations not in favor, both the Senate and Advisory Board must publish the rationale behind the difference in opinions to the student body.

## **Article VI. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

Section 1. The Legislative Branch of the SGA (SGA Senate) holds all legislative power under the direction of the President of the Senate.

- a. The elected members of the Legislative Branch include: the President of Senate (1), Vice President of Senate (1), Committee Chairs (9), and Class Senators (16). Their term of office shall last from the Transition Ceremony at the end of the academic year when they are elected, until the Transition Ceremony at the end of their year of service.
  - i. Members must be re-elected or re-appointed every academic year in order to serve in the same position.
  - ii. The Senate President, Senate Vice President, and Committee Chairs are elected by the student body at large.
  - iii. Class senators are elected solely by the class of students they are running to represent (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior). Each class shall elect

four class senators as their representatives. Class is defined by expected graduation date.

- b. The Senate President and Senate Vice-President must have previously served in Senate for at least two (not necessarily consecutive) semesters to be eligible to run for said positions. Committee Chairs must have served in Senate for at least one semester to be eligible to run for said positions.
- c. The appointed members of the Legislative Branch, also known as the Senate Staff, include the Parliamentarian and the Senate Secretary.
  - i. The Senate Staff are appointed by the Senate President following their election, with consent from the Senate Elections and Appointments Committee.
  - ii. The Senate Staff shall attend all meetings stipulated by the Senate President with a full voice and no voting privileges.

#### Section 2. Senate Procedures:

- a. Senate meetings shall adhere to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, and all questions of procedure shall be directed to the Parliamentarian.
- b. Senate shall require quorum at all meetings in order to conduct official business. Quorum is defined as a majority of the sitting senators being present at a meeting.
- c. Senate shall require a vote of fifty percent plus one of quorum to approve any legislation (bills). Any approved legislation shall be presented to the SGA President and the Advisory Board. Board members will offer a formal recommendation, either in favor or not in favor, of a bill to the SGA President, after which they will approve or veto the bill.
- d. The Senate may override a veto by the SGA President with a vote of at least two-thirds majority of the entire membership.

#### Section 3. The duties of the Senate Vice-President shall include:

- a. Overseeing Senate committees and their various activities and pending initiatives.
- b. Assuming the powers and duties of the Senate President in case of absence or removal.
- c. Assisting the Senate President in supervising the attendance of all Senate members and enforcing the attendance policy.

#### Section 4. The duties of the Parliamentarian shall include:

- a. Acting as the foremost authority on *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* and serving as the advisor to the SGA on regulatory and procedural matters.

- b. Assisting the SGA President and Senate President in maintaining order and correct procedure during official Senate meetings.
- c. Attending all meetings stipulated by the Senate President with a full voice and no vote, including regular Senate meetings.

Section 5. The duties of the Senate Secretary shall include:

- a. Accurately recording all meeting minutes and notes as assigned by the President of Senate. This includes, but is not limited to, weekly Senate meetings.
- b. Efficiently archiving all documents, minutes, notes, and other data of the Senate. They will work with the Director of Administration and Director of Communications to organize and make public such materials.
- c. Reporting all passed bills to the SGA President, the President's Secretary, and the Advisory Board.

Section 6. The process of bill passage through the SGA Senate involves the following steps:

- a. A Senator introduces a bill, which is slotted into the relevant committee's docket by the Senate President.
- b. The committee will conduct research as-needed to make the changes they deem necessary to the bill and reintroduce the bill to the Senate floor upon committee approval. Bills are not required to pass from committees and may be voted down and removed from the committee's docket.
- c. If a bill passes the full Senate, it is sent to the SGA President, the President's Secretary, and the Advisory Board by the Senate Secretary.
- d. Failed bills at any stage can always be changed and reintroduced.

Section 7. The SGA Senate shall be comprised of the committees listed below:

A. The Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) duties shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. Selecting a representative from within the committee to attend the meetings of the University Academic Affairs Committee (UAAC) within the University Faculty Council (UFC).
- b. Staying well informed on University academic issues, requirements, and developments.

B. The Community Relations Committee (CRC) duties shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. Selecting a representative from within the committee to attend the meetings of the Town and Gown Committee and the Fredericksburg City Council.

- b. Serving as a liaison between the SGA and the residents and government of the City of Fredericksburg while endeavoring to foster positive relationships between the three entities.
- C. The Diversity and Unity Coordinating Committee (DUCC) duties shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Providing diversity and inclusion-focused outreach and representation.
  - b. Increasing programming and networking opportunities for diversity-related student organizations.
  - c. Sponsoring, in full or in part, joint community service and/or education efforts with interested groups.
  - d. Selecting a representative to attend meetings of the Multicultural Leadership Council.
- D. The Elections and Appointments Committee (EAC) duties shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Administering and overseeing campus wide elections of all elected members of the SGA, consistent with the rules and schedule set by the Universal Elections Committee.
    - i. Planning and administering election rules and procedures workshops to educate prospective candidates. This includes providing a physical copy of the election rules and procedures handbook to all attendees.
    - ii. Running a session after workshops in which prospective candidates may be formally nominated to run.
    - iii. Providing oversight and management during the campaign period, including referring possible violations to the Universal Elections Committee.
  - b. Confirming all appointees of the SGA President and Senate President.
- E. The Ethics and Oversight Committee (EOC) duties shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Creating and maintaining the SGA Code of Ethics.
    - i. Any changes to the Code of Ethics shall be subject to full Senate approval.
  - b. Ensuring that all elected and appointed members of SGA are following the SGA Code of Ethics.
  - c. Hearing petitions for removal of any elected or appointed member of the SGA.
    - i. A hearing must be held to ascertain all pertinent facts and accusations. The accused member and accuser must both be present.
    - ii. Removing any member of the SGA from office requires a majority vote by the committee's senators in favor of removal to proceed.



- iii. The full Senate body must also vote in favor of removal by a two-thirds majority to remove the accused person from office.
    - iv. If a two-thirds vote is not reached in either situation, the accused person may remain in their position and may not be charged again with the same violation during the current academic year.
  - d. Investigating any allegations of misconduct, misuse, or corruption within the SGA or its affiliate organizations.
    - i. Any student or SGA member may level accusations.
    - ii. Resulting procedures should follow those set above in item c.
- F. The Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC) duties shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Promoting student civic engagement in the student body.
    - i. This shall be done by hosting events such as debates between candidates for office, voter registration drives, Constitution Day activities, and student education on legislative issues.
  - b. Coordinating SGA participation in the University's Lobby Day.
  - c. Working with academic departments to sponsor relevant events.
- G. The Student Life Committee (SLC) duties shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Selecting a representative from within the committee to attend the meetings of the University Student Affairs Committee (UAAC) within the University Faculty Council (UFC).
  - b. Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures concerning the quality of student life.
  - c. Addressing and promoting everyday non-academic student concerns as it relates to campus life, including, but not limited to, dining, parking, residence halls, athletics, activities, mental health, and wellness.
  - d. Serving as the primary liaison to the Division of Student Affairs.
  - e. Working with clubs and programming organizations to promote student engagement on campus.
- H. The University Facilities and Services Committee (UFSC) duties shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Selecting a representative from within the committee to attend the meetings of facilities-focused advisory groups such as the Culinary and Sustainability Councils.
  - b. Staying well informed on issues regarding campus infrastructure and physical plant needs.

- c. Handling matters of physical infrastructure issues, such as residence halls, campus grounds, and student services provided by the University.
  - d. Responsibility for all issues of environmental sustainability before the Senate, including current University practices and proposed programs.
- I. The University Relations Committee duties (URC) shall include, but not be limited to:
- a. Maintaining and administering the Senate website and all Senate social media accounts.
  - b. Advertising and coordinating Senate events in consultation with the Senate President and Senate Vice President.
  - c. Drafting and publishing statements to the student body in consultation with the Senate President.
  - d. Assisting other committees in conducting surveys and other data collection efforts.

Section 8. Committee Rules and Procedures:

- a. Each committee shall be composed of one committee chair, class senators, and a maximum of six non-senator students. Class senators may serve on as many committees as they choose.
- b. Questions before a committee shall require a simple majority to pass.
- c. Non-senator student committee members shall have a full voice and vote on any internal committee actions. On questions of bill passage out of committee, non-senators retain a full voice on legislation, but do not have voting privileges.
- d. Committees shall meet at least once a week at a time and date agreed upon by all members. This shall be in addition to regular Senate meetings for the purpose of conducting committee business and considering legislation.

Section 9. The duties of Senators shall include:

- a. Collecting and representing their constituents' viewpoints to the very best of their ability. This includes, but is not limited to engaging with students outside of the SGA environment, and canvassing students for their opinions on legislation or other issues.
- b. Being proactive in communicating with constituents regarding their opinions and views on any issue the SGA is dealing with to be better informed when casting their votes.
- c. Attending all applicable and required meetings as defined by the Senate President.
- d. Acquiring and maintaining a good working knowledge of Senate procedures and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

Section 10. The Senate may form at any time impermanent (ad-hoc) committees to augment the activities of the standing committees, or to study and investigate a specific problem area that requires special attention. The committee, led by a sitting Senator, and whose committee membership is open to all students shall be dissolved whenever its purpose is deemed fulfilled by the Senate body.

## **Article VII. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Section 1. Members of either the Executive or Legislative branch, excluding the SGA Vice President, may not concurrently hold a position or office in the opposite branch (ex. a Senator may not also represent an organization on the Advisory Board).

Section 2. No member of either branch may temporarily appoint another student to their position unless stated otherwise in this constitution.

Section 3. Candidates for appointed SGA positions must fill out the SGA Appointment Application to be considered. The application shall be constructed by the SGA President-elect and made accessible through all SGA channels. The candidates must be chosen and approved prior to the Transition Ceremony.

## **Article VIII. ELECTIONS/REMOVAL**

Section 1. Any SGA officer or appointee may be removed if they have failed to satisfactorily perform the duties of, or uphold the standards of, their office.

Section 2. In the case of removal of the SGA President from office either due to their resignation or their inability to perform their duties, the powers and duties shall devolve to the SGA Vice President. In case of the removal of the SGA Vice President from office, the powers and duties shall devolve temporarily to the Vice President of the Senate.

Section 3. If a position is vacant after one fall general election or any special election cycle, then the SGA President may appoint an eligible student to the position. All appointments must be approved by the Senate Elections and Appointments Committee.

Section 4. All elected members of SGA shall be chosen by a secret ballot based on a plurality of votes cast.

Section 5. The oath of office for all elected and appointed members of the SGA shall be administered by the head of their respective branch at the Transition Ceremony; the SGA

Vice-President shall swear in all Senators, and the SGA President shall swear in all Staff and Board members. The incoming SGA President must first be sworn in by the outgoing President, and, once sworn in, shall swear in the Vice President. The oath is as follows:

“I name, do hereby solemnly promise to support and maintain the Constitution of the Student Government Association of the University of Mary Washington, and I pledge my best efforts to the efficient performance of the duties of position to which I have been elected/appointed.”

#### **Article IX. REPEAL AND REFERENDUM**

Section 1. The student body has the right to call for a referendum on any issue within its jurisdiction and to repeal any piece of legislation which has been passed by the Senate.

- a. A petition of five percent of the student body shall call the question.
- b. A plurality of votes cast is required to repeal legislation.

#### **Article X. AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. An amendment to this constitution may be proposed by any student. The amendment shall then be handled by the Senate Ethics and Oversight Committee. The Senate must approve the amendment by a three-fourths majority. If the amendment passes, it will be sent to the student body for a vote. If a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority of students who vote are in favor of the amendment, it passes.

#### **Article XI. RATIFICATION**

A decision made upon the plurality of votes cast by students marks the ratification of the SGA Constitution.