

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS  
EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY  
Student Government Association**

**Article I: Statement of Purpose**

We, the students of Eastern Mennonite University ordain and establish under the constitution and by-laws of the University this constitution and by-laws for the Student Government Association of Eastern Mennonite University in order to accomplish the following purposes:

1. To develop responsible student leadership.
2. To acknowledge the opportunity and obligation of students to participate in addressing student and institutional concerns.
3. To sponsor beneficial student activities and organizations.
4. To stimulate communication and cooperation among students, faculty and administration, and the greater community.
5. To encourage accountability to the policies and the Anabaptist values fundamental to the University.
6. To foster community and strive to make improvements in all areas of University life.

**Article II: Membership**

*Section 1.* All full and part-time undergraduate students of Eastern Mennonite University are members of the SGA and are eligible to vote in all elections.

*Section 2.* All members of the SGA have the following rights and responsibilities:

- A. The right of access at any time to the files of the SGA after having received permission from a member of the Executive Committee.
- B. The responsibility to devote themselves to their education, realizing that it is a total process which requires not only the accumulation of facts, concepts, and methods or inquiry, but also the gaining of an understanding of society and their role in that society.
- C. The responsibility to make themselves cognizant of the regulations of the University and to comply with them.
- D. The responsibility to respect the professional integrity of the members of the faculty and administration.
- E. The responsibility to uphold and advance the academic integrity of the University.
- F. The right and responsibility to express concerns and work for change in a responsible manner.

*Section 3.* The SGA is financed by an appropriation from the Student Activities Fee.

*Section 4.* At any time a petition signed by 10 percent of the membership of the SGA asking for a general vote on a ruling of the Senate will be granted, and the matter will, within one week, be submitted to a vote of the student body. A two-thirds majority vote of the membership of the SGA overrules the decision of the Senate.

**Article III: Organization**

*Section 1.* The executive branch of the SGA is called the Executive Committee.

A. The following are considered members of the Executive Committee

1. President or Co-presidents
2. Vice-president
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Vice President for Marketing

B. Duties and powers of the Executive Committee

1. To carry out the executive functions of government.
2. To take any action in an emergency when the Senate cannot possibly meet, such action being subject to review at the next Senate meeting.
3. To recommend legislation to the Senate.
4. To oversee ad-hoc committees formed to address short-term concerns.
5. To prepare a budget proposal, along with the advisor, for the allocation of SGA monies.
6. To schedule and supervise elections of executive officers and senators.
7. To communicate to the Senate actions, expenditures and issues under consideration.
8. To enforce the provisions of the constitution of the SGA and all accompanying regulations.
9. To provide adequate orientation for incoming officers of each position.

C. Qualifications

1. Executive officers of the SGA must be in at least their second semester at EMU when they serve on the Executive Committee.
2. Executive officers of the SGA may not be on disciplinary or academic probation at the time of election.
3. Qualifications may be waived by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

D. Duties and powers of the Executive Officers

1. President or Co-presidents

- a. To call all meetings, prepare agendas, and preside as chairperson of the Senate, but not vote on Senate actions.
- b. To hold the power to veto any action taken by the Senate. In the event of co-presidents, both must affirm the veto or it is void.
- c. To be an ex-officio member of all committees appointed by the Senate.
- d. To call special meetings of the Senate and/or meetings of the Executive Committee.
- e. To maintain SGA files located in the SGA office and content of SGA website.
- f. To ensure that the provisions of the constitution of the SGA are properly executed.
- g. To present the decisions of the Senate to the students, faculty, and/or administration.
- h. To attend or appoint two representatives to attend the meetings of Strategic Planning Council.
- i. To maintain posted weekly office hours.
- j. To appoint or serve as leader of the Union of Student Organizations.

2. Vice-president

- a. To perform the duties of the President upon absence or request of the President(s).
- b. To generally aid the President in fulfilling responsibilities.
- c. To be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Opinion Board.
- d. To be responsible for the Friday chapel announcements.
- e. To maintain posted regular office hours.

3. Secretary

- a. To serve as recording secretary of the Senate and be responsible for all correspondence and clerical work.
- b. To serve in the absence of the President and the Vice-president to assume the same powers and responsibilities and to appoint a secretary pro-tempore when serving as president.
- c. To keep and post the minutes of all Senate meetings on the SGA website.

d. To maintain posted regular office hours.

4. Treasurer

a. To present the SGA budget for the Senate approval upon completion.

b. To receive and disburse SGA funds as directed by the Senate.

c. To establish and maintain an accurate system of bookkeeping.

d. To submit a final fiscal report to the Senate at the close of the term of office.

e. To open the books for observation upon request of members.

f. To maintain posted regular office hours.

5. Vice President for Marketing

a. To be responsible for all marketing and publicity of SGA and related events.

b. To delegate ad-hoc committees for marketing projects.

c. To be a point of contact for SGA public relations within EMU.

d. To be responsible for the SGA website and social media content.

e. To create all promotional material for the SGA.

f. To maintain posted regular office hours

E. Elections of Executive Officers

1. Nominations

a. Nominations for candidates must be made by means of a petition bearing the signatures of at least 25 students and must be filed by the designated date with the Executive Committee.

b. The Senate will ensure the nomination of at least one candidate for each executive office by nominating one or more names if necessary.

2. Election

a. The names of all candidates for all executive offices must appear on the same ballot.

b. Election of the executive officers of the SGA must take place before the first of April.

c. The election is by secret ballot.

d. No absentee ballots may be accepted.

e. Write-in votes will be tallied.

- f. The Executive Committee is responsible for seeing that the elections are adequately supervised by providing tellers who will be responsible for counting the ballots, notifying the winners, and filing the numerical results of the election.
  - g. The candidate receiving the majority of the votes cast will be declared elected.
  - h. In case no candidate receives a majority of the vote, a run-off election between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be held the following week.
3. Term of Office
- a. The term office will be one year and one month, which will begin the first of April and terminate the last of the following April.
  - b. Any executive officer of the SGA may be dismissed from office by two-thirds vote of the electing constituency or by a three-fourths vote of the Senate.
  - c. Vacancy will be filled by a special election to be conducted no later than two weeks after the time of vacancy unless a regular election is scheduled within one month. The requirements of Article III, Section 1, Paragraph E, sentence 1-b may be waived in the case of a special election to fill a vacancy.
  - d. A resignation must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the SGA two weeks before the resignation is to go into effect and must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

*Section 2.* The legislative branch of the SGA is called the Student Senate.

A. The membership of the Senate consists of:

- 1. The Executive Committee.
- 2. Thirteen senators.
- 3. One non-voting faculty representative.
- 4. One non-voting staff/administrative representative.
- 5. The Vice President for Student Life as an ex-officio non-voting member.

B. Duties and powers of the Senate

- 1. To carry out the legislative functions of government.
- 2. To have power to override the presidential veto by a two-thirds vote.
- 3. To approve the SGA budget.
- 4. To designate ad-hoc committees to address short-term concerns.

5. To make recommendations to the faculty and administration.
6. To promote activities which accrue to a strong spiritual, academic and social climate on campus.
7. To approve a slate of peer review board members as needed by Student Life.
8. To select student representatives to serve on the various institutional committees.
9. To carry out the SGA Strategic Plan that has been approved by the previous Senate. The Senate and related responsible parties are to work on items for their respective time period to the best of their ability. Each April, the Strategic Plan is open for review to allow the Senate to revise it as necessary for following years.

#### C. Qualifications

1. All Senators must be full or part-time undergraduate students of EMU and cannot be on disciplinary or academic probation at the time of their election.
2. The Senator elected as the new student representative cannot have attended EMU during the previous year.
3. Qualifications may be waived only by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

#### D. Duties and powers of Senators

1. To be present at meetings of the Senate.
2. To be familiar with general parliamentary procedures so as to facilitate Senate business.
3. To engage regularly in dialogue with members of their constituencies in order to maintain acquaintance with their views.
4. To be members of institutional committees, attend meetings of their respective committees and act as liaison between Senate and the committee.
5. To recommend legislation to the Senate.
6. To maintain posted regular office hours.

#### E. Election of Senators

1. Appointment
  - a. The Executive Committee has the power to determine the number of senators to be elected for each constituency basing this appointment upon the number of residents on and off campus, allowing for one new student senator representing first-year and transfer students. A constituency system can be determined by residence halls, class sizes, etc, or not used at all.

2. Nominations

- a. Nominations for candidates for Senators must be made by means of a petition bearing the signatures of at least 25 students and must be filed by the designated date with the Executive Committee.
- b. The Executive Committee must ensure nomination of at least one more candidate than possible conditions for each resident constituency by nominating additional names if necessary.

3. Election

- a. Fall Senate elections must take place before the third Tuesday of September. If necessary, an election can be held in the month of January to fill any vacant Senate positions for the spring semester.
- b. Senate positions not filled during the Senate elections shall be open to any student as representatives at large. These positions will be filled by a special election to take place no later than three weeks following the regular Senate election.
- c. The elections are to be conducted by secret ballot.
- d. No absentee ballots can be accepted.
- e. Write-in votes must be tallied.
- f. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes are to be declared elected.

4. Term of office

- a. The term of office for Senators coincides with the school year and begins on the first day of classes. Those elected in the fall will begin their term of office immediately following the election.
- b. Any Senator may be dismissed from office by a two-thirds vote of the electing constituency or by a three-fourths vote of the Senate.
- c. A vacancy in the position of Senator may be filled by a special election to be conducted no later than two weeks after the time of vacancy unless a regular election is scheduled within a month.
- d. A resignation must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the SGA two weeks before the resignation is to go into effect and must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.
- e. A record of attendance to Senate meetings showing four absences within a semester or three consecutive absences for any one Senate member means automatic dismissal from office. An absence is defined by missing at least 50% of the meeting. (This

requirement may be waived in special cases by a three-fourths vote of the Senate.)\*

F. Rules affecting Senate meetings

1. Meetings of the Senate are to be held as follows:
  - a. At a time and place designated by the Senate.
  - b. Upon the call of the President of the SGA.
  - c. Upon petition by one-half of the members of the Senate.
2. Quorum: A majority of the members of the Senate constitutes a quorum.
3. Senate meetings are to be open to any student, administrative or faculty member, or other interested persons for observation and/or expression.
4. Robert's Rules of Order, Revised shall be the parliamentary authority of the SGA in all cases not covered by the constitution.

G. Student representatives to the Board of Trustees

1. The President or Co-Presidents will serve as student representatives to the Board of Trustees. The Senate will appoint a second Senator to serve when there is only one President.
2. These students are the official representatives of the student body at the regular Board of Trustees meetings with privileges of discussion.

H. Duties and powers of faculty and staff representatives

1. To be familiar with parliamentary procedure.
2. To be familiar with institutional structure and processes of the University.
3. To act as a liaison between SGA and their peers on faculty and staff.
4. To act in an advisory role to the Senators, making them aware of how decisions may affect faculty and staff and looking for opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.

I. Appointment of faculty and staff representatives

1. The Executive Committee will choose the faculty and staff representatives in the spring prior to their year of service.
2. Term of office for faculty and staff representatives will coincide with the school year and begins on the first day of classes.

3. A faculty or staff representative may be dismissed from office by two-thirds vote of the membership of SGA or by a three-fourths vote of the Senate.

#### **Article IV: Amendments**

##### *Section 1. Initiation*

Amendments to this constitution may be initiated by any member of the Senate or by a petition bearing the signatures of ten percent of the members of the SGA.

##### *Section 2. Proposal*

An initiated amendment shall require two-thirds vote of the Senate to become a proposed amendment.

##### *Section 3. Adoption*

- A. The proposed amendment must be posted for public notice at least two weeks prior to its being voted upon by the entire SGA.
- B. A two-thirds majority of the votes cast by the entire SGA is required for the adoption of the proposed amendment.
- C. On approval by the President of the University and the President's Cabinet, such amendments shall become part of the constitution.