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Student Government Association bylaws

Student Government Association, Northeastern University

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STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

- A. All Executive Board members, as elected officials, are members of the Association during their tenure. Senators are elected in the manner authorized by Article IV of the Constitution. The Senate will comprise a ratio of no more than one Special Interest seat for every two elected Senate seats, in addition to the Executive Board.
- B. Special Interest seats are offered to student organizations that either represent a significant population of the University community or have significant influence over University programs, and that are in good standing as prescribed by the Student Involvement Board and the Campus Activities Office. There will be a minimum of fifteen Special Interest seats. A Special Interest Senator applicant must complete the nomination form, including thirty signatures of students currently active and registered with the Campus Activities Office in the represented student organization. For organizations containing less than thirty members, the applicant must obtain three-fourths of said organization's member's signatures. The president of said student organization must sign the applicant's nomination form signifying confirmation of applicant's status as an active member and appointment as Special Interest Senator.

If any group does not fill its seat or violates the criteria of the Association for Senatorial status at any time, the vacancy will be opened. Special Interest Senator confirmation will be conducted by the Chief of Staff. These groups shall be selected on a first-come, first-serve basis to fill the seats. Any group that is deemed by the Chief of Staff to have not filled the seat or to have violated the criteria for Senatorial status will be given the opportunity to appoint a new Special Interest Senator within the time period of four weeks from notification. In the case that the group's representative is removed from the roster on a second occasion within one academic semester, that group will be unable to petition for a seat until one academic semester has passed from the date of removal.

- C. The Executive Vice President is a member of the Senate with limited voting rights, voting only in the case of a tie.
- D. Over the course of the semester, the office of the President requires on average the equivalent of forty hours per week, the office of the Executive Vice President requires on average the equivalent of thirty hours per week, and the offices of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Student Involvement, Vice President for Student Affairs, the Vice President for Student Services, the Comptroller, the Chief of Staff and the Executive Director of Communications each require on average the equivalent of twenty hours per week. All positions for which individuals receive a stipend are required to provide a typed/written report of their Association activities monthly in formats determined by the Executive Board, to be made available on the Association's website within five business days of the end of the month.
- E. Senate meetings are open to the public and members of the public may work with any committee, Senator, or officer.
- F. Senators are required to attend weekly Senate meetings, attend all Full Body Senate meetings, attend and participate on one committee, and complete one office hour per week, as defined by the Executive Board.

1. Attendance at a Senate meeting includes attendance via the internet for Senators outside the Boston area, so long as said Senator can hear and speak in all discussions and can see all pertinent documents. In this case, all secret ballot votes will be communicated directly to the Association advisor(s), when available, or the Senate Parliamentarian.
2. A Senator may be excused from a Senate or Full Body meeting for one of the following, provided a 24-hour notice is given to the Chief of Staff:
 - a. An academic commitment;
 - b. Personal illness or injury;
 - c. Illness or death in the family;
 - d. Unavoidable co-op commitment;
 - e. Religious or cultural commitment;
 - f. Jury duty;
 - g. Military service; or
 - h. A reason approved by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

In extenuating circumstances, the Chief of Staff has the option to waive the 24-hour requirement;

3. The office hour requirement is waived for Senators serving on more than one standing committee or board. Senators missing their scheduled office hours must make up the time within one academic week. Failure to make up missed office hours within one week will count as half an absence from Senate.
4. Any Senator attending less than one half of a scheduled Senate meeting, as defined by the Standing Procedures, will be assessed one half of an unexcused absence.
5. If a Senator is not excused from or does not attend a committee meeting in a week it will count as an absence from Senate. If a Senator cannot attend a weekly committee meeting, the Senator must submit in writing to the committee chair formal notification twenty-four hours in advance. In extenuating circumstances, the chairperson has the option of waiving the 24-hour requirement. A senator may only be excused from a committee meeting if they are on the roster. A senator is considered on the roster after attending 2 consecutive meetings at any point in the semester unless otherwise stipulated in the committee's governing documents.
6. The only exceptions to the above rules will be illness or death in the immediate family, or an academic commitment (including co-op).
7. Any Senator accumulating five or more unexcused absences from weekly Senate meetings during his or her term will be deemed by the Executive Board to have abandoned the seat.
8. The committee and office hour requirements are waived for those Senators who also serve as members of the Executive Cabinet.

G. Committee Members are non-Senator, non-voting members of a standing committee of the Association.

Committee Members are required to attend the weekly committee meeting on which he or she serves.

1. A Committee Member is considered on the roster after attending 2 consecutive meetings at any point in the semester.
2. A Committee Member may be excused from a committee meeting for one of the following, provided a 24-hour notice is given to the chair of the committee:
 - a. An academic commitment;
 - b. Personal illness or injury;
 - c. Illness or death in the family;
 - d. Unavoidable co-op commitment;
 - e. Religious or cultural commitment;
 - f. Jury duty;
 - g. Military service; or
 - h. A reason approved by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

In extenuating circumstances, the chair has the option to waive the 24-hour requirement;

3. Any Committee Member accumulating two or more unexcused absences from the weekly committee meetings during a given academic semester will be deemed by the chair of the committee to have abandoned the seat.

ARTICLE II: BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COUNCILS

A. CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chairperson of each of the following standing committees will have the responsibility to:

1. Set the time, date, agenda and location for meetings;
2. Enforce parliamentary procedure;
3. Coordinate all administrative duties of the committee; and
4. Vote in the case of a tie.

B. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of each of the following committees will have the responsibility to:

1. Attend all meetings promptly;
2. Be prepared to discuss items on each week's agenda;
3. Work on assigned issues and update the committee on progress made; and
4. Promote the legislative process of the Association.

C. STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees include the Academic Affairs Committee, Communications and Events Committee, Student Affairs Committee, and the Student Service Committee, and are subject to the following:

1. Standing committees will be comprised of the chair, as defined in the Constitution, Vice-Chair (the Assistant Vice President for the respective area) and Association Senators.
2. Standing committees are open to all members of the University community, unless a motion to go into executive session is carried by a two-thirds vote of the committee.
3. Voting privileges are reserved for the Vice-Chair and Association Senators.
4. Standing committee powers and responsibilities lie within the area of the respective Vice President or Executive Director.
5. The Communications and Events Committee will have the responsibility of coordinating at least two student outreach programs per month.

D. FINANCE BOARD

1. The Finance Board will be comprised of the chair, as defined in the Constitution, Vice-Chair (who is a Senator appointed by the chair), not more than six Association Senators (one of which must be a Special Interest Senator), not more than six undergraduate students that are not Senators, and the Student Activities Business Office Manager. All members will have voting privileges, except the chair, who will vote in the case of a tie. There must be at least two students that are not Senators for voting to occur. The members of the Board are not to vote as special interest advocates, but as student interest advocates.
2. The Finance Board will, during the course of its deliberations:
 - a. Accept and review, until a date designated by the chair and announced one month in advance, program requests from student groups that meet the guidelines of the Student Activity Fee manual.
 - b. Accept and review, at any time before the last Finance Board meeting of any semester, reallocation requests of student groups;
 - c. Review the current financial status of all funded student groups;
 - d. Collect and review spending reports, according to deadlines established in the Student Activity Fee Manual;
 - e. Set up and announce Treasurers' Workshops to be held a minimum of three times per full semester and once during each summer semester;
 - f. Assign specific groups to each member, who shall:
 - i. Serve as a liaison from the Board to the assigned groups;

- ii. Assist the assigned groups with program requests, program request presentations, spending reports, and reallocations;
 - iii. Act as a lead member during discussion of the assigned groups and provide necessary financial information and status to the rest of the Board;
 - iv. Record allocation summaries and discussions made in the Board for future reference; and
 - v. Provide allocated amount of each item to the Chair;
- g. Maintain a Student Activity Fee Manual including Finance Board policies, objectives and procedures, subject to approval of the Student Involvement Board.
3. Members of the Finance Board will have the responsibilities to:
- a. Review all budget proposals and all possible financial records before each meeting; and
 - b. Maintain confidentiality on matters discussed when requested by the Chairperson. Violating this rule will be cause for dismissal from the Board. The Chairperson will take appropriate action for the violation of this rule.

E. CO-OP ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will chair the Co-op Advisory Council. The Co-op Advisory Council will comprise:
 - a. Voting members: six members of the Academic Affairs Committee, four Co-op Faculty appointed and/or elected by the Co-op Faculty, one faculty member appointed by the Faculty Senate, and two students-at-large who will represent a diverse population of Northeastern, appointed by the President of the Association in consultation with the chair of the Co-op Advisory Council; and
 - b. Non-voting members: the chair of the committee unless there is a tie, the Vice President of Co-op, one non-faculty member appointed by the Provost, and any other ex-officio members appointed by the President of the Association.
2. The Co-op Advisory Council will:
 - a. Promote collaboration between the students and the Co-op Department;
 - b. Forward student grievances regarding the Co-op program or its staff to the appropriate grievance committee;
 - c. Propose changes on issues regarding Co-op;
 - d. Serve in an advisory capacity to the Vice President of Co-op about the Co-op Department; and
 - e. Forward all final recommendations to the Vice President of Co-op for approval.
3. The Co-op Advisory Council meeting will be open to all members of the Northeastern community, unless a motion to go into executive session is carried by a two-thirds vote of the committee.

F. UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

1. The University Health and Counseling Services Advisory Board will be comprised of the chair, as defined in the Constitution, four Association Senators (at least one of whom shall be a member of the Student Services Committee), two students that are not Senators, the Assistant Treasurer of the University, the Director of the University Health and Counseling Services, a representative from Counseling Services, and a GPSA representative appointed by the GPSA President.
2. The Board may invite to attend the meeting other members of the Northeastern University community or persons outside of the University whose expertise is needed in resolving an issue.
3. The University Health and Counseling Services Advisory Board will have the responsibilities to:
 - a. Review all student concerns related to University Health and Counseling Services;
 - b. Propose changes to the University Health and Counseling Services division that would enhance operations; and

- c. Review the benefits and costs of the Student Health Plan and make recommendations for changes.

G. ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Elections Committee will be comprised of the chair, Vice-Chair (who is a Senator or student-at-large appointed by the chair), Association Senators and Students-at-Large. Membership will exclude the President, any member of the Operational Appeals Board, and during the election period, any candidate for direct election.
2. Quorum for the Committee will be defined as one-half of the voting membership, plus one. Quorum cannot be fewer than five.
3. Voting Rights and Attendance Requirement
 - a. All students attending any three of the first five meetings in a given semester will be granted voting rights for the remainder of that semester.
 - b. Any member may be excused from attendance for extenuating circumstances allowing that member to have until the sixth meeting to be granted voting rights. The chair and vice-chair of the Committee must unanimously approve any excused absence. Appeals of such decisions may be submitted in writing to the chair of the Elections Committee within five days. The chair will place the appeal on the agenda of the committee's next regularly scheduled meeting. A two-thirds vote of the present members of the committee, excluding the chair and vice-chair, will overturn the decision.
 - c. Any member requesting an excused absence must request it at least 24 hours in advance. In dire circumstances, this rule may be waived with the unanimous approval of the chair and vice-chair of the Committee.
 - d. A member may not exceed two unexcused absences any time after receiving voting rights in any one semester.
 - e. All members of the undergraduate student body will have speaking rights regardless of voting status, except in executive session.
4. The Elections Committee will have the responsibilities to:
 - a. Organize and administer Association elections;
 - b. Collaborate with the Communications and Events Committee on the promotion of Association elections;
 - c. Ensure the validity of Senate elections under the supervision of the President;
 - d. Request from University Student Affairs and receive verification of candidates' good academic and judicial standing and certify their eligibility in accordance with Campus Activities Office guidelines;
 - e. Set campaign guidelines for Association elections; and
 - f. Maintain the Direct Elections Manual, which will contain all the rules and procedures pertaining to the direct election of Association officers, subject to Senate approval.

H. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT BOARD

1. The Student Involvement Board will be comprised of the chair, as defined in the Constitution, Vice-Chair (the Assistant Vice President for Student Involvement), six Association Senators who are not members of the Finance Board, six members of any recognized student organization in good standing as determined by the Campus Activities Office, and the Director of Campus Activities, who is a non-voting member.
2. Review is defined as oversight of the final decisions of the appropriate committees for an approval or disapproval by the Student Involvement Board. The specific duties of the Board are to:
 - a. Review changes in student group constitutions, excepting the Student Government Association;
 - b. Grant full status/recognition to student groups on tentative status;
 - c. Review questions regarding student organization status classifications;

- d. Distribute student organization office space;
 - e. Serve as an arbitrator in matters when a student feels that a student organization is not following its constitution as approved by the Student Involvement Board;
 - f. Aid the Director of Campus Activities in amending the Student Organization Handbook;
 - g. Draft and maintain a mission statement, as well as list operating procedures with regard to elections to the Board, procedures for filling vacated seats, and privileges of the Executive Committee; and
 - h. Provide resources to student organizations regarding communication and collaboration.
3. Members of the Student Involvement Board will have the responsibilities to:
- a. Present sound reasoning and debate on matters being discussed;
 - b. Attend all meetings of the Board. After two unexcused absences, a seat will be considered vacated by the Executive Committee of the Board;
 - c. Remove themselves in the event of a possible conflict of interest in order to preserve the integrity of the Board;
 - d. Keep confidential all matters discussed, unless otherwise instructed by the consensus of the Board and the Chair. Violation of the confidentiality of the Board will be cause for removal from the Board; and
 - e. Meet with and prepare student organizations for presentations to the Board.

ARTICLE III: OPERATIONAL APPEALS BOARD

The Operational Appeals Board is the third branch of the Association.

- 1. The Board shall be comprised of six Justices, the Chair, who is a non-voting member, and a University administrator within the Division of Student Affairs to provide advising relevant to a given case, who is a non-voting member;
- 2. Quorum shall be no less than four of voting membership; and
- 3. No Justice shall hold position in any other Association branch while serving on the Board.

ARTICLE IV: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

A. EXECUTIVE BOARD

- 1. A candidate for President must:
 - a. Be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student and be in good academic standing, throughout the campaign period, as defined by the Undergraduate Student Handbook;
 - b. Complete an Intent to Run form as prescribed by the Direct Elections Manual;
 - c. Attend the Candidates Briefing with one campaign worker as prescribed by the Direction Election Manual, unless excused by the Elections Committee.
- 2. Any candidate for office must meet participating membership status (defined as membership in the Senate or active participation on one of its committees or boards) for a minimum number of weeks prior to his/her nomination, not including intersessions or time spent on the inactive roster, from time of entry into the Association in order to be nominated.
 - a. Presidential candidates must have participating membership in the Association for twenty-five weeks;
 - b. Executive Vice President candidates must have Senatorial status for twenty-five weeks;
 - c. Vice Presidential candidates must have participating membership in the Association for twenty weeks;
 - d. Comptroller candidates must have participating membership in the Association for twenty weeks and Finance Board member status for twenty weeks; the Finance Board membership requirement may be waived at the time of nomination by a majority vote of the Senate; and
 - e. Elections Committee Chair candidates must have participating membership in the Association for fifteen weeks;

- Should nominations close for any officer position with no qualified candidate having accepted a nomination, then this section may be suspended with a simple majority vote of the Senate.
3. Annual elections for the President and Executive Vice President for the following academic year will be held in the spring semester according to procedures in the Direct Elections Manual. Annual elections for all other elected officers for the following academic year will be held in the spring semester and will be conducted by the Full Body Senate.
 4. Any member of the Senate may move to block any nomination for a directly elected position during any Full Body Senate at which nominations are made; the motion to block will be carried by a two-thirds vote, conducted by secret ballot.
 5. In a Senate election to fill an officer position, a Senator may:
 - a. Vote for any candidate qualified and nominated as prescribed by the Constitution and Bylaws, and recommended by the Elections Committee;
 - b. Submit a statement of no confidence in all candidates nominated for that position; or
 - c. Abstain from voting.
 6. If any election results in a plurality of “no confidence” votes, the position will be declared vacant and nominations for the position will reopen. A special election will be duly convened. If no qualified members have accepted nominations by the close of nominations, or if the special election otherwise fails to produce an officer, the Executive Board will appoint a Senator to serve as the acting officer until a special election can convene to fill the position.
 7. Special elections may become necessary should an Executive Board member resign, be impeached and convicted, or be deemed by vote of the Executive Board to have abandoned their office under Article VI, Section B of the Constitution. In such a case, an election will be called following the Constitutional guidelines for nominations and elections in conjunction with the stipulations concerning Full Body Senate meetings.
 8. Executive Board members shall serve a term beginning at the end of the Summer I semester and extending to the end of the following Summer I Semester.
 9. Rising seniors are ineligible for office if they are on track to complete their course of study in the Fall Semester. The Executive Board will assume office knowingly aware of the continued moral responsibility to fulfill the roles and responsibilities associated with their term in office.
 10. The election process for Association officers will follow a procedure recommended by the Elections Committee and approved by the Executive Board.

B. STUDENT SENATE

1. A candidate for Senator will provide the Chief of Staff with a petition of thirty signatures of students in the same college as the candidate, as well as his/her college, year of expected graduation, and major; and a personal statement including, but not limited to, a brief biography and a mission statement.
2. A Senator shall receive voting rights for Full Body Senate meetings after having been a member, in good standing, for four academic weeks during the past fourteen months, and has been on the roster for the preceding two Senate meetings.

ARTICLE V: LEGISLATION

- A. The following forms of legislation shall be used by the Senate.
 1. A Senate Resolution shall be used to call for action from the University on any matter that affects the student body directly or indirectly. These resolutions are forwarded to the President of the University for consideration.
 2. A Sense of the Senate shall be used to provide student opinion on any matter of concern to students.
 3. An Internal Resolution shall be used to define the operations of the Association and its committees, officers, and Senators in order to clarify the powers and duties of the Association as stated within the Constitution and Bylaws. An Internal Resolution shall expire at the close of the Summer I semester

following its adoption, unless the resolution specifies either an expiration date or that it shall be permanent. The Senate may renew Internal Resolutions as it deems necessary.

4. A Resolution of Governance shall be used to amend the Constitution and Bylaws.
- B. If legislation ratified in the Senate is not approved by the signature of the Association President within one week, the legislation is enacted. If vetoed, the reasons for the veto must be presented by the President at the next Senate meeting.
- C. Senate Resolutions and Senses of the Senate will be introduced to the Senate under New Business. This legislation can only be voted upon during the next meeting or any following meeting, in which the resolution is introduced under Old Business. The Bylaws can be suspended in accordance with the rules for the suspension of ordinary standing rules in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. In order for this rule to be suspended, a two-thirds majority shall be required for the suspension of the rule and the passage of the legislation.
- D. Legislation pending on the floor of the Senate at the end of any semester must be reintroduced in the following semester. Any amendments or changes in language or structure approved during the previous semester are retained as part of the bill, even if the amended document was not voted on in the previous semester. Standing Senate rules that apply to new legislation will also apply to reintroduced legislation. If the chief sponsor of the legislation to be reintroduced will not be present, the sponsor will be responsible for officially appointing a new chief sponsor for the legislation.
- E. A referendum is a direct vote in which the undergraduate student body is asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal. Referenda will be classified according to the same distinctions as Senate legislation.
 1. Referenda are carried out in accordance with policies and a time line established by the Executive Board.
 2. Referenda will be accepted according to the follow procedure:
 - a. The sponsor of the referenda must complete and submit the Referenda Submission Form (to be released no later than one month prior to the due date) to the Executive Board. The Board will examine and approve the question for feasibility, adherence to University policies, and fairness in wording.
 - b. If approved, the referendum and 750 undergraduate student signatures will be provided to the Senate. The Senate will further examine and approve the question for feasibility, adherence to University policies, and fairness in wording.
 - c. All appeals of the decision after being heard by the Executive Board and the Senate are referred to the Operational Appeals Board.
 - d. All approved questions will be posed to the student body during the spring direct elections for a campus-wide vote.

ARTICLE VI: ABANDONMENT/IMPEACHMENT

- A. Impeachment is defined as the process whereby an accusation is brought against a member for serious misconduct. These charges must be initiated on the Senate floor. Any member of the Senate may move Articles of Impeachment and name the person at whom the charges are directed. There must be a second to the motion. Before stating the motion and naming the individual(s), the mover must motion to enter executive session for the purpose of hearing a motion to impeach. If carried, the motion to impeach may then be debated. Once debate closes, a vote will be taken to determine if the process should be continued. A simple majority will carry this motion. If the Senate votes to continue the process, a Full Body Senate meeting will be convened to hear the impeachment charges and decide whether to convict the accused individual. At this meeting, the Senator who made the initial motion shall present detailed reasons for requesting the impeachment. The person so accused will then have an opportunity to rebut the charges. A vote will be taken on the question and must pass by three-fourths majority. If issues remain unclear, the motion can be postponed for one week. The three-week notification requirement for this Full Body Senate will be waived, however, with at least one-week notice given to Senators prior to such meetings.
- B. If under the provisions of Article VI, Section B of the Constitution the Executive Board concludes that an election for any elected position should be held, the Executive Board believes that one or more of the officers

has abandoned their responsibilities. Abandonment is defined as a sustained failure to perform required duties as set forth in the Constitution, Bylaws, and legislation, or persistent absences from meetings of the Senate, Executive Board, committees, or other bodies on which the officer served. The recommendation will be voted upon by the Executive Board and needs a simple majority to pass. If the recommendation passes, a Full Body Senate meeting will be held, at which the Executive Board will put forward its recommendation(s) and ask that the position(s) be declared vacant. Officers who abandon their responsibilities will automatically forfeit their Senate seats.

ARTICLE VII: VOTING PROCEDURES

- A. All votes concerning legislation and substantive amendments will be taken by mandatory roll-call votes unless a motion is made from the floor for adoption by unanimous consent. If no objection is raised to the motion, the legislation or amendment is considered ratified. If an objection is raised, a roll-call vote must be taken.
 - 1. Roll-call votes are not mandatory for approval of minutes, or for any other motions and non-substantive amendments to legislation.
 - 2. Senators maintain the right to call for a roll call vote at times that they deem appropriate and that are in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.
 - 3. A motion for a roll call vote will pass with one-third of the body present voting in favor.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

- A. To amend this document a Resolution of Governance must be ratified by the Full Body Senate.
- B. Proposed amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws must be submitted in writing no less than one week in advance of a Full Body Senate meeting to the Executive Board to be placed on the agenda and considered by the Senate.
- C. The agenda and proposed amendments will be provided to the Senate and on the Association's website no less than six days before the Full Body Senate meeting.

ARTICLE IX: SENATE DOCUMENTS

The Executive Board shall be responsible for providing pertinent documents to be reviewed and considered by the academic senate, to the entire Full Body Senate roster, no later than forty-eight hours prior to the academic senate's call to order for all legislation, and twenty-four hours for all other documents.

ARTICLE X: ASSOCIATION APPROVAL

This amended document has been approved by the required two-thirds vote of the Full Body Senate of the Association through a vote on December 5, 2011.

Michael W. Sabo
President
Student Government Association
Date: