

December 06, 2010

## Student Government Association constitution

Student Government Association, Northeastern University

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# STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

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## NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

### CONSTITUTION

#### ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization will be the Student Government Association of Northeastern University. For the purposes of this document, the organization will be referred to as the Association.

#### ARTICLE II: MISSION

##### A. Mission Statement

The Student Government Association serves as the voice of the undergraduate student body.

It strives to promote student interests within the University and its surrounding communities in order to enrich education, student life, and the overall Northeastern experience.

##### B. Object

In support of this mission, the object of the Association is to be the official liaison between the students and the University Faculty and Administration; to act in an advisory capacity to the Faculty and Administration; to strive to make the University a continually more serviceable institution; to serve students as a resource in resolving concerns; to be the means by which the student body of the University communicates with the faculty, administration, and Trustees of the University; to be the approval authority for all petitions or referenda that students or student organizations wish to circulate among the student body; to be the means by which students influence the educational programs, processes, and the administrative management of the University; and to distribute funds from the Student Activity Fee to eligible student organizations. The Association is the means by which students are represented in the governance of the University. The Association is therefore the general interest group on campus advocating in the interest of all undergraduate students. At its electoral base are full-time undergraduate students currently enrolled in the University. The Association's operational activities are carried out by three active service branches that are open to all qualified students in the manner prescribed by the Constitution.

The Association was established on the basis that it would be the representative group of the entire full-time undergraduate University community including all of its diverse views and peoples.

It is our hope and duty that the Association respect, understand, and accept the differences and similarities that exist within and outside our University community.

#### ARTICLE III: STRUCTURE

The Association comprises three branches. The purpose of the Executive Branch is to manage the programs, processes, and services authorized by the Senate, Constitution, and Bylaws. The Operational Appeals Board shall be the branch of the Association that arbitrates appeals. The Student Senate is the representative body of Northeastern University students that governs the Association and carries out the legislative process of the Association.

## **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Students become voting members of the Senate by following the election procedures outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association. Senators will receive membership status through the petition process whereby they are responsible for completing the nomination form. Current senators may not sign a prospective senator's nomination form.
- B. Members of the Senate must be enrolled as full-time, undergraduate students of Northeastern University, in good academic and judicial standing, and be responsible to an identifiable constituency. Senators are responsible for maintaining an effective system of two-way communication and consistently returning to and representing their respective constituents. Senators will serve terms that each span one full year.
- C. Senators will be voting members of the Senate during both academic and co-op semesters. Senators may petition the Chief of Staff to be placed on the inactive roster for long-term Senate excusal, for reasons specified in the bylaws. The Chief of Staff's decision must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Executive Board. Senators must have served in the Association for the previous four weeks to be placed on the inactive roster and can remain on the inactive roster for no longer than six months. Senators who have been placed on the inactive roster retain voting rights for Full Body Senate meetings, but are excused unless choosing to be in attendance.
- D. The Association will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, gender identity, religion, religious creed, genetics, age, sex, ancestry, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status.

## **ARTICLE V: SENATE**

- A. The Senate is the deliberative body from which all authority vested in the Association originates. The Senate quorum shall be one-half of the voting roster, plus one. The Senate has the powers and responsibilities to:
  - 1. Represent the voice of the student body;
  - 2. Recommend to the University President proposed legislation for approval or rejection regarding University life, policies, and concerns of the student body;
  - 3. Override an executive veto or decision by a two-thirds majority;
  - 4. Approve the Association budget;
  - 5. Approve or reject outside individuals or organizations to circulate petitions or referenda among the students;
  - 6. Approve or disapprove requests by political candidates to obtain access to the University in the absence of other recognition from sponsoring organizations or units within the University (this decision is subject to University policies and procedures governing access to the campus of outside individuals or organizations);
  - 7. Remove any officer from the Association, following the impeachment process set forth in the Bylaws;
  - 8. Retain all powers vested in the Association that are not specifically delegated in the Constitution and Bylaws.
- B. Full Body meetings of the Senate represent the full membership of the Senate, including the inactive roster of Senators. Full Body Senate meetings, in addition to possessing all powers of the Senate, are held to:
  - 1. Nominate and elect Association officers designated for Senate election;
  - 2. Make changes to the Association Constitution and Bylaws;
  - 3. Hear and decide charges of impeachment.
- C. Full Body Senate meetings are called by the Executive Board, who (except for meeting to hear impeachment charges or hold a special election, which will require a minimum of one week of notice) will give no fewer than three weeks of notice to the Full Body Senate roster as to the time and place of the meeting. By a simple majority of the Senate, a Senator can initiate a Full Body Senate meeting. In such a case, the same notification rules apply. Quorum for the Full Body Senate meeting will be one-half of the full roster (active and inactive) plus one.

## **ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS**

## A. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

A Full Body Senate meeting will be held for nominations and elections of all elected officers. Nominations for emergency elections will be completed in writing and do not necessitate a Full Body Senate meeting. For Senate-elected positions, elections will take place no sooner than one week after nominations are opened. The process of nominations and elections for positions directly elected by the full-time undergraduate student body will be subject to the rules outlined in the Direct Elections Manual.

## B. VACANCIES

1. If the President resigns, is removed from, or abandons office, the Executive Vice President will assume the position of the President and retain the position of Executive Vice President in an acting capacity until the Full Body Senate can convene for an election for Executive Vice President. In the event that both the positions of President and the Executive Vice President become vacant, the Vice President for Student Involvement shall assume the presidency on an interim basis until elections for the positions can be held, according to the replacement clauses in Article VI, Section B. In the event that the Vice President for Student Involvement is unable to serve, the Presidency shall be filled in the following order: Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Vice President for Student Services. Under no circumstances will a sitting Vice President assume another vice presidency.
2. If the Executive Vice President resigns, is removed from, or abandons office, separately from the President, the Full Body Senate will convene for an election. The Executive Board will appoint a Vice President to assume the role of presiding officer of Senate until the Full Body Senate can convene.
3. If a Vice President resigns, is removed from, or abandons office on or prior to the last day of December, the respective Assistant Vice President will assume the position of Vice President until the Full Body Senate can convene for an election. If a Vice President resigns, is removed from, or abandons office after the last day of December, but before an election for the following term has been held, the respective Assistant Vice President will assume the office of Vice President for the remainder of the term. If a Vice President position becomes vacant after an election for the following term has been held, the Vice President-elect will have the opportunity to assume the role of Vice President immediately, otherwise the respective Assistant Vice President will assume the office of Vice President for the remainder of the term.
4. If the Comptroller or Elections Committee Chair resigns, is removed from, or abandons office on or prior to the last day of December, the respective Vice-Chair will assume officer position until the Full Body Senate can convene for an election. If the officer resigns, is removed from, or abandons office after the last day of December, but before an election for the following term has been held, the respective Vice-Chair will assume office for the remainder of the term. If the Comptroller or Elections Committee Chair position becomes vacant after an election for the following term has been held, the officer-elect will have the opportunity to assume the position immediately, otherwise the respective Vice-Chair will assume office for the remainder of the term.
5. If an officer leaves a vacancy, as described by Section B, Subsections 3 and 4 of this Article, having failed to designate an Assistant Vice President or Vice-Chair, the Executive Board will appoint a Senator to serve as the acting officer until elections are held, or the term comes to an end, depending on the time of year, as described in Subsections 3 and 4 of this Section.
6. If an officer-elect is determined to be ineligible or step down before the Summer II Semester, nominations for that position will be re-opened and the standard procedure will be followed for emergency elections. If no candidate wins a plurality of the votes cast during the emergency Full Body Senate meeting, then the President shall appoint an interim officer from the pool of eligible Senators, with the consent of the Executive Board. If there is no President-elect, the Executive Vice President-elect shall become the interim President-elect, and he/she shall appoint an interim Executive Vice President-elect. Individuals appointed to serve on an interim basis shall remain in office until such time as the Full Body Senate meeting can elect a permanent replacement.

## C. EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

### 1. STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

The Student Body President (also “President”) is the Chief Executive Officer of the Association and is responsible for executing all its policies and objectives. The President oversees interactions with community bodies and Boston-area student-governance bodies. The President has the powers and responsibilities to:

- a. Be the spokesperson for the Association, and the Student Body as a whole;
- b. Chair the Executive Board;
- c. Report to the Senate on Executive Board actions and activities;
- d. Serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Senate;
- e. Approve or veto legislation with a signature within one week of Senate approval;
- f. Appoint student members to represent the Association to University committees with a simple majority approval of the Executive Board;
- g. Receive reports from the student members of University committees and, if necessary, report to the Senate of these meetings;
- h. Facilitate the Association’s involvement with University-wide financial planning and priorities;
- i. Receive reports on and make recommendations for the allocation of all student controlled fees, where a board has not been established to oversee such allocations;
- j. Nominate Justices for the Operational Appeals Board, and release the names of the nominated candidates prior to confirmation by the Senate and the Executive Board;
- k. Nominate a Parliamentarian to be confirmed by the Senate;
- l. Nominate a Chief of Staff to be presented to the Executive Board prior to Senate Confirmation;
- m. Evaluate the performance of the Association officers, and make recommendations through the Executive Board to the Senate concerning their individual continuations in office; and
- n. Act as a liaison notwithstanding any liaison authority possessed by other Association officers.

### 2. EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

The Executive Vice President serves to assist the President in long-term planning, special projects and initiatives. In addition, the Executive Vice President oversees the Association’s communications, events, archives, fundraising, and alumni connections. The Executive Vice President has the powers and responsibilities to:

- a. Be the presiding officer of the Senate;
- b. Assume the Presidency in the event the President is unable to perform the duties of that office;
- c. Nominate an Executive Director of Communications to be confirmed by the Senate; and
- d. Develop the Association’s budget proposal for the next fiscal year, subject to Executive Board approval, and submit it to the Senate.

### 3. VICE PRESIDENTS

- a. All Vice Presidents have the power and responsibility to:
  - i. Serve as the official spokesperson for the committees which they chair;
  - ii. Assist students in addressing concerns, complaints, and grievances in their respective areas;
  - iii. Appoint or remove any individual serving in an appointed position reporting to the respective Vice President, as defined by the Constitution or Executive Board authority;
  - iv. Maintain the rights and privileges afforded to a Senator; and
  - v. Present a bi-annual written report on the activities and accomplishments in their respective areas to the Association.
  
- b. The Vice President for Academic Affairs serves to address student concerns in the areas of college relations and curriculum, Provost’s office, experiential education, libraries, classroom

facilities, career services, honors programs, University calendar, international opportunities, and undergraduate research. The Vice President for Academic Affairs has the:

- i. Power and responsibility to chair the Academic Affairs Committee; and
  - ii. Responsibility to attend all Faculty Senate meetings, and the power and responsibility to act as the Association's liaison to the Faculty.
- c. The Vice President for Student Affairs serves to address student concerns in the areas of athletics, inclusion and diversity, student conduct, arts, residential life, off-campus students, alcohol and drug education, international students, and spiritual life. The Vice President for Student Affairs has the power and responsibility to:
- i. Chair the Student Affairs Committee; and
  - ii. Nominate representatives to participate in the selection process for Student Hearing Board members.
- d. The Vice President for Student Involvement serves to address student concerns in the areas of student organizations, student leadership, as well as to provide resources and opportunities to student organizations in the areas of collaboration and communication. The Vice President for Student Involvement has the power and responsibility to:
- i. Chair the Student Involvement Board; and
  - ii. Appoint students to seats on the Student Involvement Board, subject to confirmation by the Executive Board. In addition to the applications of those nominated, the applications of all students for seats on the Student Involvement Board shall be forwarded to the Executive Board.
- e. The Vice President for Student Services serves to address student concerns in the areas of food and dining, information services, facilities, housing, health services, public safety, financial services, campus recreation, student accounts, ID card services, mail services, retail operations, renewable energy, the Student Center, parking, and transportation. The Vice President for Student Services has the power and responsibility to chair the Student Services Committee.

#### 4. COMPTROLLER

The Comptroller serves to oversee the allocations of the Student Activity Fee and has organizational financial oversight over all student organization accounts. The Comptroller has the power and responsibility to:

- a. Chair the Finance Board;
- b. Serve as the official spokesperson for the Finance Board;
- c. Serve as ex-officio non-voting representative to the Student Involvement Board; and
- d. Nominate students to seats on the Finance Board, subject to confirmation by the Executive Board. In addition to the applications of those nominated, the applications of all students for seats on the Finance Board shall be forwarded to the Executive Board.

#### D. OTHER ELECTED OFFICERS

##### 1. ELECTIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Elections Committee Chair serves to oversee the process by which students serve the Association through direct election, representative election, and petition. The Elections Committee Chair has the power and responsibility to chair the Elections Committee.

## ARTICLE VII: APPOINTED POSITIONS

A. All individuals serving in appointed positions will fulfill a term ending at the conclusion of the incumbent Executive Board's tenure in office.

B. ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENTS

1. The Assistant Vice Presidents (AVPs) for Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Student Involvement, and Student Services will be appointed by their respective Vice Presidents. Each Assistant Vice President has the responsibilities to:
  - a. Assume the responsibilities of the respective Vice President, pursuant to Article VI, Section B, Subsection 3, in the case that the Vice President resigns, is removed from, or abandons office;
  - b. Aid the Vice President with the Vice President's responsibilities; and
  - c. Maintain the rights and privileges afforded to a Senator.
2. The Assistant Vice President for Student Involvement has the power and responsibility to serve as the Vice-Chair of the Student Involvement Board.

C. CHIEF OF STAFF

The Chief of Staff serves to assist the President and Executive Vice President in the administration of the Association, specifically in the areas of transition planning, Association financial management, office management, retention and member development, and Senate document management, including official records of business. The Chief of Staff has the power and responsibility to:

1. Manage the Association roster;
2. Serve as the Association's treasurer, including the production of financial reports as required by the Finance Board;
3. Maintain and process the business and financial matters of the Association under the general supervision of the President; and
4. Prepare and present a summary of Association spending to the Executive Board on a monthly basis and to the Senate on a bi-annual basis.

D. VICE-CHAIRS

The Vice-Chairs for the Student Involvement Board, Finance Board, and Elections Committee will be appointed by their respective Chairs. Each Vice-Chair has the power and responsibility to:

1. Aid the Chair with the Chair's responsibilities;
2. In the case that his/her respective Chair resigns, is removed from, or abandons office, the appointed Vice-Chair will serve as interim-Chair of the Committee for a minimum of four academic weeks, before turning over the position to the newly elected/assumed Chair.

E. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Executive Director of Communications will aid the Executive Vice President on matters concerning the communications of Association projects and initiatives to the student body and the media, and the execution of Association events. The Executive Director of Communications will have the power and responsibility to chair the Communications and Events Committee.

F. PARLIAMENTARIAN

The Parliamentarian serves to manage the Association's governing documents, rules and appeals. The Parliamentarian will have the power and responsibility to:

1. Chair the Operational Appeals Board;
2. Receive and process all requests for appeals from Association boards;
3. Advise the presiding officer of the Senate on procedural precedence and act as a resource during weekly Senate meetings;
4. Advise the Association officers on Robert's Rules of Order, and act as a resource in matters pertaining to parliamentary procedure; and
5. Remain available for consultation by any Association committee or board on matters pertaining to the policies and procedures governing the Association.

**ARTICLE VIII: BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

#### A. EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board comprises the President, Executive Vice President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Student Involvement, and Vice President for Student Services. The Comptroller serves as an ex-officio member of the Executive Board<sup>1</sup>. The President votes on the Executive Board only in the case of a tie. The Executive Board collectively serves the student body and has the powers and responsibilities to:

1. Set the date, time, place, and agenda of Senate meetings;
2. Provide the agenda of the Executive Board on the Association's website, within 24 hours of the Executive Board meeting;
3. Confirm students to the Finance Board, Renewable Energy Initiatives Board, and the Student Involvement Board;
4. Confirm students for Senate consideration of appointment to the Operational Appeals Board;
5. Override Presidential Appointment to Chief of Staff by a three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) vote, and inform the Senate of such proceedings.
6. Vote on questions of whether Association officers have abandoned duties, evaluate the performance of Association officers, and make recommendations to the Senate concerning their individual continuations in office;
7. Act for the Senate when it is not possible to wait for the next Senate meeting for a decision on an issue. The Executive Board shall not have the authority when the issues involve major policy changes or adaptations that will significantly affect the student body. When the Executive Board acts on behalf of the Senate, the Senate shall be informed of such actions and the reasons for them immediately;
8. Act for a committee or board when a committee or board may not meet because of intersession, summer semester, or in the event of an emergency. Acting in this capacity under such circumstances, the Executive Board will make every effort to contact the members of the appropriate committee or Board to determine the status of the issues when the committee or board last met;
9. Represent the Association to the Board of Trustees, University President, and other senior University officials concerning matters related to the Undergraduate Student Body; and
10. Create or eliminate positions within the Association that are not enumerated in the Constitution and Bylaws and do not alter the membership of the Senate.

#### B. EXECUTIVE CABINET

The Executive Cabinet comprises the members of the Executive Board, the Chief of Staff, and the Executive Director of Communications.

#### C. OPERATIONAL APPEALS BOARD

The Operational Appeals Board will serve to hear appeals from Association boards and committees. The Board shall be guided by its mission statement and procedures as approved by the Senate. Membership of the Board can vary by case and shall be defined in Appendix A of this document.

1. Justices shall hold their offices while in good standing in the University.
2. In all cases in which a representative of the Association is a party, the Board shall have original jurisdiction. In all other cases, the Board shall have appellate jurisdiction, under any such regulations the Senate shall make.

#### D. STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing committees serve to make recommendations to the Senate on Association policies and objectives in the

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<sup>1</sup> Per Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, §49, ex-officio members have "all the privileges of board membership, including the right to make motions and to vote."

respective area; and to execute all Association policies and objectives in the respective area of focus. The standing committees are chaired by the respective officer and are:

1. Academic Affairs Committee
2. Communications and Events Committee
3. Student Affairs Committee
4. Student Services Committee

E. ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The Elections Committee will serve as the oversight and advisory body for nominations and elections. It will be a committee of the Senate. The Elections Committee shall be guided by its mission statement as confirmed by the Senate.

F. FINANCE BOARD

The Finance Board will make recommendations to the Senate on student organization account procedures, policies, and objectives, make recommendations to the Student Involvement Board on the Student Activity Fee manual under which specific budget allocations are determined, and approve all student organization requests and annual allocations. The Finance Board shall be guided by its mission statement as confirmed by the Senate.

G. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT BOARD

The Student Involvement Board will make recommendations to the Senate on Association policies and objective in the area of student organizations. The Student Involvement Board has the power and responsibility to approve new student organizations and changes to student organization constitutions, and to distribute designated student organization office space. The Student Involvement Board shall be guided by its mission statement as confirmed by the Senate.

## ARTICLE IX: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules of order as established in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised will govern the Association in all cases in which they are applicable and not in conflict with any portion of this Constitution or any bylaws, rules, or procedures that the Association may adopt.

## ARTICLE X: ADVISOR

- A. The advisor to the Association will be a full-time faculty member of the University. A co-advisor shall be appointed by the Executive Board; the co-advisor shall be any full time staff member in the Division of Student Affairs within the University. The advisors will have the responsibilities to:
1. Provide advice and guidance to the members of the Association on matters of importance to the Association;
  2. Serve as a conduit, when requested, between the Association and the Faculty and Administration of the University;
  3. Oversee the counting of ballots at Association elections;
  4. Serve as a repository of Association knowledge and provide this information when requested and as necessary to the members of the Association; and
  5. Serve as an ex-officio non-voting member on all association boards and committees. Attendance at these meetings will not be considered mandatory unless agreed upon with the appropriate chairperson.
- B. The advisor(s) will serve at the pleasure of the executive board.

## ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS

To amend this document, a Resolution of Governance, as defined by the Bylaws, must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the Full Body Senate. Such Resolutions shall take effect once signed by the President of the University or his/her designee.

## **ARTICLE XII: 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 6, 2010.

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Ryan Fox  
President  
Student Government Association  
Date:

## **ARTICLE XIII: UNIVERSITY APPROVAL**

This amended document is approved.

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Philomena Mantella, Senior Vice President - Enrollment Management and Student Life  
*on behalf of* Joseph E. Aoun, President  
Northeastern University  
Date:

## APPENDIX A: Operational Appeals Board Membership

The fiduciary responsibility of the Student Activities Fee lies with members of the university's administration; therefore, for all appeals of Student Activity Fee funding decisions, the Operational Appeals Board shall operate under the following membership guidelines:

1. The Board shall be comprised of the following individuals:
  - a. Comptroller,
  - b. A Justice from the general membership of the Board, appointed by the Executive Board for the duration of the Executive Board's term,
  - c. The university's Vice President for Student Affairs, or designee
  - d. Student Body President, as an ex-officio, non-voting member
  - e. Parliamentarian, as an ex-officio, non-voting member
2. In the event that the Association is the appealing group, the university's Vice President for Student Affairs, or designee, will make the final decision on the appeal; and
3. Quorum shall be no less than the full voting membership.

For all other jurisdictions of the Board, as defined by the Article VIII, Section C of the Constitution, the Operational Appeals Board shall operate under the following membership guidelines:

1. The Board shall be comprised of six Justices and the following as ex-officio, non-voting members:
  - a. The Chair
  - b. A University administrator within the Division of Student Affairs to provide advising relevant to a given case, who is a non-voting member;
  - c. Student Body President, in appeals of board or committee decisions only
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.

*This appendix has been approved by the required two-thirds vote of the Full Body Senate of the Association through a vote on May 24, 2010.*

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Ryan Fox  
President  
Student Government Association  
Date:

*This amended document is approved.*

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Philomena Mantella, Senior Vice President - Enrollment Management and Student Life  
*on behalf of* Joseph E. Aoun, President  
Northeastern University  
Date: