



Student Government Association

Constitution

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Preamble

We the students of Bluefield State University, in order to develop a spirit of cooperation in the activities of the university, afford the development through self-expression, self-control, democratic self-government and leadership, encourage student citizenship; and create an intermediary between the administration, faculty, staff, and the students in matters of general welfare, do hereby adopt this Constitution of the Student Government Association.

Article I: Definition

- A. The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association of Bluefield State University, hereafter referred in this document as the SGA.
- B. The membership of the SGA shall be representative of all students attending and paying Student Activities fees at Bluefield State University.

Article II: Purposes

- A. To represent the student body in the decision-making process directly affecting the students and Bluefield State University.
- B. To serve as a channel for the expression of student opinion.
- C. To encourage the personal, social, and academic development of students through their participation in activities in and out of the classroom.
- D. To promote a feeling of unity within the entire academic community of the university.
- E. To enhance the relationship between the academic and university communities.
- F. To maintain an active relationship with the Bluefield State University Alumni Association.
- G. To promote student responsibility and leadership.

Article III: Organization

- A. The SGA will be a representative form of government consisting of eight (8) voting Senators and four (4) undergraduate Executive Officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary). The eight (8) voting Senators shall represent the following students: 2 Senators from the College of Arts, Education, and Social Sciences; 2 Senators from the W. Paul Cole, Jr. College of Business; 2 Senators from the College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; 2 Senators from the College of Health Sciences. Executive Officers paying Student Activity fees must be full-time students and must maintain a cumulative minimum of a 2.30 GPA to hold office. Senators paying Student Activities fees must be full-time students and must maintain a cumulative minimum of a 2.30 GPA to hold office. Freshmen who apply to be a senator

must achieve a cumulative minimum 2.30 GPA at the end of their first term and maintain their cumulative GPA at or above 2.30 each semester thereafter.

- B. The Senate shall actively pursue the objective of Article II of this document. Those Senators who fail to accomplish this in good faith may be removed from office as provided in Article IX of this document.
- C. A President and Executive Officers will also be elected by the student body. The election will take place with the election of the Senate. Candidate requirements for position of President are as follows:
 - 1. Must have completed at least thirty-two (32) semester hours or two (2) full semesters of course work.
 - 2. Must be enrolled for a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours per fall and spring semester during his/her tenure in office.
 - 3. Must not currently be on university sanction for violation of any Student Code of Conduct Student Conduct standard without approval from the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students.
 - 4. Must have served as an SGA Executive Officer or Senator for one (1) full academic year.

In the event a candidate wishes to run a slate ballot, they must register the slate with the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students and the SGA Election Committee, naming the Executive Officers and Senate members running on the slate. In that event, a vote for the slate is a vote for the Presidential candidate and other slate members. An election slate can consist of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Senators. The remaining vacancies for any unfilled positions will be filled from elected Senators at a regularly scheduled meeting.

- D. The quorum of the Senate is constituted by the presence of the majority of the membership of the Senate and Executive Officers.
- E. Any motion under old or new business introduced in the Senate will be approved once it is passed by a majority of the quorum, unless otherwise required by *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- F. Each executive officer, excluding the President who will only receive a vote when there is a tie, and all elected members of the Senate shall have one vote.
- G. As compensation for serving in the position, the President will be paid a tuition waiver. Total pay will equal to one semester of full-time tuition at Bluefield State University per semester served. During the summer months, the President will keep regular office hours each week and will be compensated at the prevailing minimum wage.
- H. Anyone who has been impeached, fired, asked or forced to resign due to unethical activity involving student funds or fees, Student Code of Conduct standards, student body representation, or related student activities, including all Work Study/RSE programs

where the student defrauded the institution, is not eligible to represent the student body in any capacity in which SGA has power to govern.

Article IV: Duties and Succession

A. Duties of the President:

1. Lead the SGA in achieving the objections of this Constitution.
2. Serve as chair of the Executive Committee.
3. Preside at all meetings of the Senate.
4. Appoint or remove an Executive Officer with positions in the following order of succession:
 - A. Vice President
 - B. Treasurer
 - C. Secretary
5. Serve as or appoint the student representative to the Bluefield State University Board of Governors.
6. Appoint the Sergeant-at-Arms to assist with Constitutional interpretation, supporting the appropriate enforcement of Robert's Rules of Order at all Senate meetings, and other duties as assigned.
7. To recommend to the President of the University the members of the Senate and other students as deemed appropriately qualified who are to represent and serve on standing committees of the university.
8. To be an official liaison of the SGA in work with the administration, faculty, and staff of Bluefield State University.
9. Form new committees as needed and assign them to the appropriate Executive Officer.
10. Maintain a minimum of five (5) office hours each week during the fall and spring semesters. These hours shall be spread over the five (5) day school week.
11. Prepare the agenda for each Senate meeting. A copy of the agenda is to be provided to the Senate digitally, twenty-four (24) hours in advance, and a hard copy will be provided at the beginning of each meeting.
12. Serve as or appoint a student representative to the West Virginia Advisory Council of Students.

B. Duties of the Vice President:

1. Preside over meetings of the Senate in the absence of the President.

2. Coordinate the effective work of all SGA Standing and Special Committees as directed by the President.
3. Lead and assist the President in the execution of projects, programs, and initiatives at his or her discretion.
4. Coordinate and provide leadership for the SGA Food Pantry program.
5. Chair the Social Media & Marketing Committee.
6. Maintain a minimum of three (3) office hours each week during the fall and spring semesters. These hours shall be distributed over the five (5) day school week.
7. Perform other such activities as the President may assign.

C. Duties of the Secretary

1. Prepare and maintain accurate records of all meetings of the Senate and the Cabinet, including the time of commencement and conclusion of the meetings, in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
2. Report for approval of the minutes of the previous meeting at each meeting of the Senate.
3. Make available a copy of the minutes of each meeting to the members of the Senate. A copy will be provided digitally within seventy-two (72) hours of the meeting and a hard copy will be provided at the beginning of each meeting.
4. Prepare and distribute official correspondence of the SGA as directed by the President.
5. Maintain records of attendance in the minutes of all Senate meetings.
6. Certify that a quorum is present at the meeting.
7. Chair the Reinstatement Committee.
8. Maintain a minimum of three (3) office hours each week during the fall and spring semesters. These hours shall be distributed over the five (5) day school week.
9. Perform other such duties as the President may assign.

D. Duties of the Treasurer:

1. Maintain accurate and current records of all financial transactions involving Student Government funds.
2. Prepare a monthly financial report to be presented at the first meeting each month or more frequently if the need arises.
3. Serve as the chair of the Finance Committee.
4. Assist the President in preparing the annual budget.

5. Maintain a minimum of three (3) office hours each week during the fall and spring semesters. These hours shall be distributed over the five (5) day school week.
 6. Oversee disbursement of money approved for Recognized Student Organizations in coordination with the Office of Student Activities.
- E. Duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms:
1. Assist the President at meetings with the enforcement of Robert's Rules of Order.
 2. Assist the President on procedures for conducting meetings of the SGA.
 3. Perform other such duties as the President may assign.
- F. Duties of the Senators
1. Address the academic concerns of the students by acting as student representatives.
 2. Be accessible and accountable to their constituents by serving office hours.
 3. Serve on SGA and University Committees representing students, as assigned by the SGA President.
 4. Attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the Senate unless excused.

Article V: Procedures for Meetings of the Senate

- A. There shall be an executive meeting of the SGA Cabinet at least once each month.
- B. The regular meetings of the Senate are open to the University community for observation only, unless admitted on the agenda as approved by the President. Times and locations of the Senate meetings will be announced at the beginning of each term of office.
- C. The President is empowered to appoint non-standing committees for specific purposes as the need arises.
- D. Meeting and voting procedures will follow Robert's Rules of Order.
- E. Non-scheduled meetings may be called by the President with twenty-four (24) hour notice given and only for emergencies. An emergency constitutes anything harmful to the student body or any matter that is of urgency, as determined by the President. However, failure to properly schedule a meeting prepare a meeting agenda is not an emergency. Only those items directly concerning the emergency can be considered. At least one advisor must be consulted and present at the meeting. At emergency meetings, a majority of elected officers or senators shall constitute a quorum.

Article VI: Expectations of the Senate

- A. Senators should work within the Senate body to actively pursue relevant student issues, including helping students achieve academic success with exceptional co-curricular opportunities, promoting service to the community, championing positive school spirit, and encouraging responsible citizenship as a way of life. This specifically involves, but is not limited to, canvassing the student population by survey, word-of-mouth, or one-on-one contact and subsequent presentation of programs and services. Also included is active involvement in submission, planning, and execution of student orientated functions, including serving on university committees to represent the best interests of the student members of the specific College or School they are serving to represent throughout their term of office.
- B. Members and Executive Officers are expected to attend all meetings. When a member and/or Executive Officer has two (2) unexcused absences in any semester without being excused by the President he or she will be removed from the Senate. If a Senator or Executive Officer is late without being excused by the President for two meetings (1) unexcused absence shall be recorded. This removal may be appealed, at which time a Reinstatement Committee, consisting of three senators, and chaired by the Secretary, will hear the case and make a recommendation to the Senate. For impeachment procedures, see Article IX. For Reinstatement Committee procedures, see Article X.
 - 1. Unexcused absences are those that do not fall under the following categories:
 - A. SGA-related absence
 - B. Family emergencies (Excuse must be given within twenty-four (24) hours after missed meeting to the President or SGA Advisor.)
 - C. Illnesses/medical emergencies (Excuse must be given within twenty-four (24) hours after missed meeting to the President or SGA Advisor.)
 - D. Weather related absence
 - 2. Excused absences include but are not limited to, those absences that fall under the following:
 - A. A class that is scheduled at the time of the scheduled meeting, including Student Teaching.
 - B. Other School Organization meetings that take place during a regularly scheduled SGA meeting that are deemed necessary by the President.
 - C. Research or scheduled labs during a regular scheduled meeting will only be excused if it is scheduled by the professor, and written confirmation

from the professor is presented to the President or SGA Advisor within a 24-hour time frame before or after the scheduled meeting.

- D. The absence from any regularly scheduled meeting without a 24-hour notice given prior to the meeting. This absence must be approved by the President or SGA Advisor.
- C. No one will be allowed to attend meetings if his/her behavior indicates that he/she is preventing those assembled from conducting business. The Sergeant-at-Arms will remove anyone who is disruptive as provided in Article IV, Section E. Any member removed from regular meetings for being disruptive shall have an unexcused absence counted against them. If a member is removed more than once during a semester, Section A above applies.
- D. Members of the Senate who serve on committees are expected to follow the regulations concerning attendance at regular meetings.
- E. The Senator who serves as Chair on a committee must provide a copy of the typed or hand written minutes of each committee meeting to the President and SGA Advisor.
- F. Senators will be required to attend a minimum of five (5) events per semester. Attendance will be taken at each function. It is encouraged that all Senators attend all SGA sponsored events.
- G. Senators should be familiar with *Robert's Rules of Order* so that they understand the normal procedure for meetings. Senators will not speak out of turn, and will only be allowed to speak once they have been recognized and given the floor by the President.
- H. Vacancies will be filled from candidates who submit approved applications to the SGA. When a vacancy occurs, applications from candidates will be accepted according to the date and time received by the SGA. The candidates will then be brought before the existing SGA for confirmation by a majority vote. Senators may encourage potential candidates to submit applications for anticipated vacancies.
- I. Each elected/appointed Senator will read and sign a copy of "The Obligation of Student Government Association Members" provided by the SGA Advisor at the beginning of their term of office.

Article VII: Elections

- A. During the last week of February, an Election Commission will be formed and shall be composed of the SGA advisors or a designee appointed by the Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students and at least one Senator. The election process will be conducted in such means that the new Senate can meet by September. During the spring or summer of each academic year, campus-wide solicitation of those interested in Executive and Senate seats will begin. The Election Commission shall publicize and gather applications and submit them to the Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of

Students Office for verification of GPA, number of hours completed, and Student Code of Conduct related matters.

- B. The deadline for withdrawing from an election is one week, equivalent to five (5) school days, prior to the opening of the polls on the first scheduled day of the election and must be done in writing and given to the election commission.
- C. The Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students Office will conduct the elections for the SGA. Polls are to be open during the allotted time designated by the election commission. Polls will be located at the Student Union or other such locations as deemed appropriate. The Election Commission will promptly certify the election of candidates in the form of a letter to the Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students and serve as the appeal board for SGA election complaints and grievances. All statistical data, including the total number of votes for each candidate as well as totals votes from each poll location, shall also be available for review and submitted to the Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students.
- D. The following guidelines shall be enforced by the Election Commission for the SGA elections and all other elections sanctioned by the SGA. Any potential candidate who violates the following guidelines shall be disqualified from the election.
 - 1. All applications for Executive Officer and Senate seats must be submitted by the announced deadline.
 - 2. No posters, flyers, or campaign materials are to be posted within ten (10) feet of a polling place.
 - 3. No individual campaigners, candidates, or supporters are to campaign within ten (10) feet of a polling place.
 - 4. The defacing of another candidate's campaign material will not be tolerated. Violators will be referred to the Election Commission for a hearing and/or be referred to the university disciplinary system.
 - 5. Any and all violations of the election procedures must be immediately reported in writing to the Election Commission.
 - 6. The posting of campaign materials must follow approved university policy as to location and must be approved by the Office of Student Activities.
- E. The new SGA executive officers and senators will assume their positions within fourteen (14) days of the certification of the election and after being administered the formal Oath of Office from the SGA Advisor or President.
- F. Any individual paying Student Activities fees directly to Bluefield State University may vote. Reference Article III, Section A for eligibility of candidacy.

Article VIII: Tenure in Office

- A. The term of office for all Senators and Officers elected from within the Senate shall begin on the first meeting following elections and end on the meeting immediately preceding the announcement of the election results for the following year.
- B. SGA Honor Cords will be awarded to graduating senate members and executive officers who have served at least one full term in office.
- C. If, in the opinion of the Senate, the President does not act in the best interest of the student body or fails to meet his or her responsibilities as outlined in this Constitution, the Senate can, by a two-thirds (2/3) margin of the body, impeach the President as provided in Article IX. If the President is so impeached, Section D below applies.
- D. If the President of the SGA resigns from his or her office, becomes academically ineligible, fails to remain enrolled as a student or is impeached under the conditions stated in Article IX, the Vice President will assume the office of the President until the next general election and complete the term. If for some reason there is no one serving in the office of the Vice President, the order of succession as stated in Article IV will be followed.
- E. A term limit of two (2) total years, per position, shall apply to positions of: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sergeant-at-Arms.

Article IX: Impeachment

- A. Any member of the Senate or elected officer from within the Senate may be removed from office if two-thirds (2/3) of the total Senate Body vote for removal.
- B. Members of the Senate who are the subject of impeachment shall be provided a written statement of the charges that serve as the basis for the impeachment.
- C. The Senate may appoint a Senator to present the impeachment charges against the subject Senator or Officer.
- D. Senators or Officers shall have the right to contest the charges, and shall be provided an opportunity to be heard by the Senate prior to any vote being taken on the matter of impeachment.
- E. Members of the Senate or Officers who are impeached are immediately removed from the Senate.
- F. Grounds for impeachment are for university or academic probation, continually acting in a manner that is not in the best interest of the student body, or persistent conduct that impeded the normal business meetings of the Senate as outlined in Article VI, Section B.
- G. Evidence of grounds for impeachment must be provided to the Senate at the time of impeachment proceedings.
- H. Upon removal, a waiting period for appointment of a new Senator or elected officer may be assessed at the discretion of two-thirds (2/3) of the total Senate body.

Article X: Reinstatement Committee

- A. The Reinstatement Committee will act by the following guidelines: Senators' having two (2) unexcused absences as outlined in Article VI (6) Section One (1), will be removed but can request to be reinstated. The request to be reinstated must be received by the President after the receipt of notice of removal and prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- B. The Reinstatement Committee will meet before the next regularly scheduled meeting, if when any Senator requests the opportunity to be reinstated. When appearing before this committee, the removed Senator shall be prepared to offer a valid reason for missing meetings and proof may be requested.
- C. The Committee will then vote on the decision to reinstate the Senator and make a recommendation to the Senate. The Senate will vote on the recommendation at the next meeting.

Article XI: Student Government Advisors

- A. There will be two (2) SGA advisors. The Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students will serve as the permanent advisor along with one (1) faculty member appointed by the Provost. The faculty advisor will serve for a one-year-term. Faculty advisors may serve successive terms.
- B. Advisors are to abide by Article II of the Constitution and follow accordingly all rules of procedure as outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order*. Advisors are called upon when questions concerning the welfare of the University or in regards to issues that they may have information about and have responsibility for leadership development in the Senate.
- C. At least one advisor for the SGA must be present and remain present for an official meeting to be conducted.

Article XII: Contracts and Purchase Orders

- A. The SGA is not empowered to enter into contractual agreements binding Bluefield State University. All contracts and purchase orders must have prior approval of the Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students.
- B. The SGA President and Treasurer must sign all purchase orders that involve the SGA.

Article XIII: Financial Procedures of the SGA

- A. A Finance Committee will consist of the SGA Treasurer, whose vote will be included only as a tiebreaker, and two (2) members of the Senate. The Treasurer will serve as the

chair of the Financial Committee. The Committee will be appointed by the SGA President and approved by the Senate each year.

B. The purpose of the SGA Finance Committee is as follows:

1. Review funding request(s) for recognized student organizational funds from Recognized Student Organizations submitted to the SGA.
2. Recommend approval or denial of these requests to the full SGA Senate.
3. Inform all Recognized Student Organizations concerning criteria and procedures for submission and following up of funding request(s).
4. Review student fee allocations and existing budget and expenditures before September 31 of each year. Upon completion of this review, and before October 1, the Committee will, recommend to the Senate any proposed increase or decrease in expenditures for the purpose of establishing a recommendation to the university administration.

C. The Procedures for the Finance Committee are as follows:

1. The Finance Committee will meet at such times as necessary, based upon the receipt of requests and the times of the activity. All members of the committee must be present for the committee to conduct business, unless the conditions of emergency circumstances are met. Emergency circumstances will be defined separately.
2. Emergency circumstances are defined as a situation where planning for an event or function is not possible. For example, conferences and competitions are normally planned, giving organizations plenty of time to use normal request channels. The cycle of the academic school year will sometimes prevent organizations from making this request in a timely manner for action by the Finance Committee. SGA strongly recommends that funding requirements for Recognized Student Organizations be an integral part of each organization's planning. If the Financial Committee cannot be convened, only the Chair, an SGA Advisor, and the Dean of Students, or a designee of the Division of Student Affairs may bypass standard procedures as an emergency committee. Additionally, the Chair and SGA Advisors share the responsibility of ensuring that the emergency request meet the established funding criteria. These decisions must be based upon existing university criteria, and satisfy the criteria for using SGA funds. Emergency requests will have a full review by the Finance Committee and a report will be presented to the full Senate at the next Senate meeting.

D. Recognized Student Organizations requesting funding from the SGA Student Organization Account must meet the following criteria:

1. Fund availability for individual recognized student organizations requesting funds from the student organizational account will be determined by the Student Government Association at the beginning of each fiscal year based on enrollment and available funds per organization in the budget, not to exceed \$1000.00 per semester.
2. Travel requests must comport with the existing Bluefield State University policies and procedures.
3. Request should be submitted at least six (6) weeks prior to a scheduled trip/activity to allow the processing of required paperwork, unless emergency conditions can be justified. The SGA Finance Committee will send notification to all Recognized Student Organizations at the beginning of each semester with general guidelines related to SGA funding. To receive funding, Recognized Student Organizations, must submit a Travel Settlement form with all receipts attached to be reimbursed.
4. Recognized Student Organizations are expected to raise a minimum of 40% percent of the total expenditure. Receipts must be maintained to ensure reimbursement.
5. A Student Organization must register with the Office of Student Activities and receive recognition status from the Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students Office to be an officially Recognized Student Organization by the second Friday of the fall semester of the academic year.
6. Funds may be requested by a Recognized Student Organization for a social activity so long as the activity is open to the entire student body.
7. Preference for the use of these funds will be given by the Finance Committee to Recognized Student Organizations that are involved in competitions or representing Bluefield State University in regional or national conferences and/or conventions.
8. With regard to event funding request, recognized collegiate fraternal organizations shall be funded in the same manner as any other Recognized Student Organization if all other criteria are met.

E. The following requirements must be met when submitting a funding request to the SGA Finance Committee:

1. A Narrative justifying the request and a full budget of anticipated expenses.
2. A Budget including the following items:

- a. Breakdown of expenses: motel, food, vehicles, fees, entertainers, etc.
 - b. Projected income for the event, describing fund raising activities.
 - c. Average prices for lodging and so forth, in the area of travel if the request includes travel. (Note: A sample budget will be available in the Office of Student Activities.)
3. Student Representatives from the requesting organization are required make themselves available to present to the Finance Committee and full SGA and to answer questions. Recognized Student Organizations are not permitted to substitute student representatives with faculty or staff advisors without advanced permission from the SGA Finance Committee Chairman or President. Requests should be made electronically to the Office of Student Activities for a general review and consultation before a representative is made available.
4. The full voting SGA membership is only responsible for approving funds, not for the distribution of said funds.

Article XIV: Amendment Guidelines

- A. Any Amendment, or change, to this Constitution must be formally proposed in writing by a member of the Senate and must be included in the agenda for the meeting at which time they will be read aloud.
- B. If approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Senate, the amendment/change will then become binding and a part of the constitution.

Article XV: Ratification

- A. This Constitution will become effective immediately upon the approval of the SGA and the Administration of Bluefield State University.