

# STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION



Student Government Association  
of Tennessee Tech University  
[SGA@tntech.edu](mailto:SGA@tntech.edu)

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# STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

## PREAMBLE

*We, the members of the Student Government Association of Tennessee Tech University come together in order to promote and perpetuate the best interests of the Tennessee Tech and the students represented therein, to ensure cooperation among said students and between students and Tennessee Tech administration, faculty, and the community to the end that the condition of the students may be improved. We hereby do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Student Government Association to serve as the guiding document for our organization and its members.*

## ARTICLE I: DEFINITION

### Section 1 – Name

The name of this organization shall be the Student Government Association of Tennessee Tech University hereafter referred to in the constitution as “SGA.”

### Section 2 – Membership

The membership of the SGA shall consist of undergraduate and graduate students of Tennessee Tech University. Membership shall not be denied on the basis of age, race, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, disability veteran status, religion, national origin, or any other bases protected by federal and state law.

## ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND POWERS

### Section 1 – Purpose

The purpose of the SGA is to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- A. Uphold the constitutional liberties and rights and to promote the general welfare of all segments of the University community
- B. Promote student participation in the affairs of Tennessee Tech
- C. Serve as a channel for the expression of student opinion to Tennessee Tech administration
- D. Support student activities and student life on campus
- E. Encourage the development of student responsibility, character, leadership, scholarship, and citizenship

### Section 2 – Scope of Power

The SGA shall be given the power to do the following:

- A. Act in all matters addressed within this constitution

- B. Implement and revise bylaws and standing rules
- C. Enact legislation to address all matters related to Tennessee Tech with the purpose of improving the student experience
- D. All other powers and responsibilities granted to the SGA by Tennessee Tech

### **ARTICLE III: ORGANIZATION**

The membership of the SGA shall consist of an executive branch, a legislative branch, and a judicial branch.

### **ARTICLE IV: EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

#### **Section 1 – Executive Officers**

The executive branch shall consist of the following elected officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

- A. The President shall be the acknowledged leader of the student body in all matters of student interest.
- B. The President shall fulfill the following responsibilities:
  - 1. Preside at all meetings of the executive cabinet
  - 2. Appoint special committees and administrative assistants
  - 3. Supervisory responsibility over SGA finances, records, and programs
  - 4. Power to veto any bill passed by the Senate
  - 5. Serve as a voting member of the Administrative Council, Athletic Committee, Chapter 606 Student Monies Allocation Committee, and other committees as appointed by the President's office
  - 6. Appoint members to the Election Commission
  - 7. Appoint students to the Executive Cabinet as outlined in Article IV Section 2
- C. The Vice President shall fulfill the following duties:
  - 1. Discharge the duties of the President in the event that the President is not able to perform his/her duties
  - 2. Serve as President for the remainder of the term in the event of a vacancy in the office of President
  - 3. Act as Speaker of the Senate
  - 4. Serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of all Senate Committees
  - 5. Cast votes in the proceedings of the Senate in the case of a tie vote

6. Recommend the chairperson for Standing SGA Committees
  7. Appoint special and ad-hoc committees of the Senate
- D. The Secretary shall fulfill the following duties:
1. Maintain the records of SGA
  2. Official correspondence of the SGA
  3. Recording the proceedings of all Senate and Executive Cabinet meetings
  4. Serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Senate
  5. Forward all bills and resolutions passed by the Senate to the President within three (3) business days
  6. Keep records of all committees and their actions
- E. The Treasurer shall fulfill the following duties:
1. Responsible for all financial matters related to SGA
  2. Present a budget report to the Senate at the beginning and end of each semester
  3. Serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Senate
  4. Preside as chairperson of the S.O.L.O. funds allocations committee

### **Section 2 – Executive Cabinet**

- A. The President may appoint an executive cabinet which shall consist of, but is not limited to, Chief of Staff, Secretary of State, Public Relations Director, and Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature (TISL) Director.
- B. Executive cabinet appointments shall be presented to the Senate one (1) week prior to the vote for ratification.
- C. Cabinet appointments require two-thirds approval of the Senate.
- D. Additional cabinet positions may be appointed at the discretion of the President with two-thirds approval of the Senate.

### **Section 3 – Executive Branch Qualifications**

- A. All elected members of the Executive Branch shall be full-time students of the University, unless on Co-op status with Tennessee Tech, and shall not serve more than two years in the same office.
- B. The President and Vice President shall be of at least junior standing the beginning in the fall semester following their election.
- C. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be of at least sophomore standing beginning in the fall semester following their election.

- D. Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates must have served SGA for at least one academic year, including, but not limited to: the Senate, the Supreme Court, Executive Office, and/or the Executive Cabinet.

**Section 4 – Executive Capacity**

Executive officers and executive cabinet members are ineligible to serve concurrently in any other capacity or office within the SGA.

**Section 5 – Executive Officer Academic Requirement**

All members of the Executive Branch shall maintain a 2.75 cumulative grade point average throughout his/her term of office.

**ARTICLE V: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

**Section 1 – Name**

The Legislative Branch shall be referred to hereafter as the “Senate.”

**Section 2 – Membership**

The membership of the Senate shall consist of representatives from each of the following:

- A. College of Agriculture and Human Ecology
- B. College of Arts and Sciences
- C. College of Business
- D. College of Education
- E. College of Engineering
- F. College of Fine Arts
- G. College of Interdisciplinary Studies
- H. Whitson-Hester School of Nursing
- I. College of Graduate Studies
- J. Residence Hall Association
- K. Freshman students
- L. Transfer students

**Section 3 – Composition**

- A. College/School Representation:
  - 1. Apportionment of representatives in the Senate shall be one (1) Senator for every three hundred fifty (350) students in each college or school or a major fraction thereof, with a minimum of one (1) Senator per college/school.

2. Apportionment shall be based on the official enrollment numbers from the previous fall semester.
- B. Residence Hall Association membership shall consist of two (2) members of the Residence Hall Association appointed by the RHA President.
- C. Freshman Student representation shall consist of one (1) member of the Freshman class for every three hundred and fifty (350) entering freshmen. The Freshman Senators will be interviewed and chosen by the SGA President and voted on by the senate at the beginning of each fall semester to serve for the academic year.
- D. Transfer Student Representation shall consist of one (1) transfer student member for every three hundred and fifty (350) transfer students as calculated in the spring semester yearly. Transfer Senators will be interviewed and chosen by the SGA President at the beginning of the fall semester to serve for the academic year.

#### **Section 4 – Apportionment of Representatives**

The Executive Council shall be responsible for reapportionment of the Senators during the spring semester if vacancies occur. This shall be completed no later than the third (3rd) Senate meeting of the spring semester.

#### **Section 5 – Qualifications**

- A. Senators shall be full-time students during their term of office.
- B. Senators shall maintain a 2.75 cumulative grade point average throughout his/her term of office.
- C. Senators from colleges and schools shall maintain a major within the college or school from which they were elected.
- D. Senators from the Residence Hall Association shall maintain the offices in those bodies which qualified them to be Senators.
- E. The Freshmen Senators shall not be more than second semester freshmen during the fall semester of the year that they are appointed.
- F. Failure of any senator to maintain these minimum requirements shall necessitate resignation

#### **Section 6 – Duties and Powers**

The Senate shall have the option of exercising the following duties and powers:

- A. Approve and maintain a budget
- B. Enact legislation
- C. Ratify by two-thirds majority vote or to reject all executive cabinet officers, SGA Supreme Court members, and appointed senators
- D. Initiate impeachment proceedings



**Section 7 – Committees**

- A. The Executive Council shall determine the SGA Standing Committees that are necessary to best serve students.
- B. The Executive Council shall determine the chairperson for each standing committee.
- C. Each member of the Senate shall serve on one (1) SGA standing committee or Tennessee Tech Committee. Limitations shall be placed on the number of ad-hoc or special committees which a Senator may serve on.
- D. Service on ad-hoc or special committees shall not exempt any Senator from service on at least one (1) SGA standing committee.

**Section 8 – Legislation**

- A. The Executive Council and Executive Cabinet shall review and discuss all bills that have been brought to the table before the next meeting of the Senate.
- B. Bills written by Senators shall be delivered to the SGA Secretary. Time and date for bill submissions shall be determined by the SGA Secretary.
- C. Bills shall be submitted in the correct SGA bill format.
- D. Senate will consider and act on all decisions made by standing, special, and ad-hoc committees of the SGA Senate.
- E. Senate shall elect, from its membership, a Speaker Pro-Tempore, who shall preside over the Senate in the absence of the Vice President. The Speaker Pro-Tempore shall also assume the Presidency in the event that the Vice-President is unable to fill a vacancy in the Presidency.
- F. Senate has the authority to override a presidential veto by a two-thirds vote of the members.

**Section 9 – Senate Capacity**

Senators are ineligible to serve concurrently in any other capacity or office within the SGA.

**ARTICLE VI: JUDICIARY BRANCH**

**Section 1 – Judicial Power**

All judicial powers granted to the SGA shall be vested in the SGA Supreme Court.

**Section 2 – Duties and Powers**

The SGA Supreme Court shall have the following duties and powers:

- A. Hold impeachment hearings on charges against any elected or appointed official of the SGA when impeachment proceedings have been properly initiated according to Article X, Section 3
- B. Adopt, by a majority vote, its own rules and regulations under which to function, provided no rule shall be made which is inconsistent with or in violation of this Constitution, Tennessee Tech policy, or state or federal law

- C. Present an opinion to the President of the Tennessee Tech or representative thereof regarding Tennessee Tech policy that is vague, ambiguous, and/or contrary to state or federal law and make requests for clarification or remediation

### **Section 3 – Functions**

The SGA Supreme Court shall have the power to hear and render decisions on all cases brought before it that involve the following:

- A. Constitutional Interpretations:
  - 1. These shall be presented by the SGA President or SGA advisor.
  - 2. A majority decision will be required to render a decision.
- B. Student Traffic Appeals
- C. Serve on the Judicial Council for student conduct cases as appointed
- D. Serve on College and University level academic misconduct committees as appointed

### **Section 4 – Membership**

The SGA Supreme Court shall have the following members, all of whom must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the SGA Senate after selection by Judiciary Selection committee:

- A. Chief Justice
- B. Associate Chief Justice
- C. Seven Associate Justices
- D. Two (2) Alternate Associate Justices that only vote in the absent of an Associate Justice

### **Section 5 – Judiciary Selection Committee**

- A. The Judiciary Selection Committee shall have the following membership:
  - 1. SGA President
  - 2. One (1) additional member of the Executive Council
  - 3. Three (3) representatives from the Legislative Branch appointed by the Executive Council
- B. A chairperson shall be selected by the committee from its membership.
- C. The Judiciary Selection Committee shall meet when necessary for the purpose of selecting the Justices whenever necessary.
- D. The Judiciary Selection Committee shall make additional appointments to fill an unexpected vacancy during a term of office.
- E. All members shall be eligible for reappointment.
- F. The chairperson shall call all meetings.

### **Section 6 – Qualifications of Justices**

- A. All Justices of the SGA Supreme Court shall have and maintain throughout their terms a minimum overall quality point average of 2.50.
- B. All justices shall be full time students throughout their terms.
- C. Failure of any justice to maintain these minimum requirements shall necessitate resignation or the initiation of impeachment proceedings.
- D. The Chief Justice and the Associate Chief Justice shall be of at least junior classification beginning in the fall semester of their selection and shall be affirmed by two-thirds vote of members of the SGA Supreme Court.

### **Section 7 – Duties and Powers of the Chief Justice**

- A. Responsible for the performance of all duties and functions of the Judicial Branch and its members.
- B. Administer the Oath of Office to the SGA officers-elect and the justice-appointees.
- C. In the event the Chief Justice is unable to perform his/her duties, the Associate Chief Justice shall perform the duties.

### **Section 8 – Period of Service**

All members of the SGA Supreme Court shall serve for a period of one (1) year and may not serve for more than four (4) years in succession.

### **Section 9 – Vacancies in Office**

Vacancies on the SGA Supreme Court shall be filled within thirty (30) days by the Judiciary Selection Committee.

### **Section 10 – Power of Impeachment**

The power of impeachment of elected or appointed officials of the SGA shall be vested in the SGA Supreme Court.

### **Section 11 – Judicial Capacity**

No member of the Judiciary Branch shall be eligible to serve concurrently in any other capacity or office within the SGA.

## **ARTICLE VII: ELECTIONS**

### **Section 1 – Frequency**

- A. Executive and legislative branch elections shall be held in each spring semester following spring break.
- B. The Elections Commission shall be responsible for setting the date for each election.
- C. Run-off elections will be held within seven (7) days after a regularly scheduled election.

- D. If deemed necessary by a two-thirds vote of the Elections Commission, elections may be held at any time during a semester.

### **Section 2 – Voting**

All students enrolled in at least one (1) credit hour shall have the right to vote for candidates in any election provided that members of the legislative branch (senators) shall be elected by students in their respective colleges/schools.

### **Section 3 – Executive Council Elections**

- A. All executive officers shall be elected by a majority vote.
- B. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes on the first ballot, a run-off election will be held between the two candidates receiving the largest portion of the votes. The candidate that receives the most votes in the run-off shall be elected.

### **Section 4 – Senator Elections**

All senators shall be elected by a plurality of the votes cast.

### **Section 5 – Candidate Requirements**

- A. Each candidate shall be required to sign a release of academic records (grade point average and hours earned) in order for the SGA Advisor or designee to verify his/her eligibility to run for office. Candidate GPA or hours earned will not be shared by the SGA Advisor or designee.
- B. Candidates' legal names as indicated on their student record shall be placed on the ballot. If a candidate wishes to run under a name that differs from their legal name, he/she may submit a written request to the Election Commission for consideration and determination. The decision of the Election Commission is final.
- C. Executive Council and Senate election rules shall be determined by Election Commission.

### **Section 6 – Election Commission**

- A. The Election Commission shall consist of seven members: three (3) SGA Senators, the SGA President, one (1) SGA Supreme Court Justice, and two (2) students at large that are not currently affiliated with SGA.
- B. The students at large shall be those deemed most qualified among applications solicited from the student body.
- C. The Chairperson of the commission shall be the sitting SGA President.
- D. No member of the Election Commission may be a candidate for SGA Executive office while serving as a member of the Commission. Commission members may be candidates for SGA Senate during their term in office, but they shall not oversee the election from the college or school from which they are a candidate.
- E. The Election Commission shall determine and enforce all rules regarding SGA elections.

- F. The Election Commission shall inform the SGA senate of all rule revisions one (1) week prior to each election.

## **ARTICLE VIII: TERMS OF OFFICE**

### **Section 1 – Executive Officers and Senators**

The term of office for Executive Officers and Senators shall be one (1) year and shall begin when they are sworn in within the final two weeks of each spring semester.

### **Section 2 – Freshman Senators & Justices**

The term of office for Freshman Senators and Justices shall begin when they are presented at the first Senate meeting of the fall semester and shall end at the end the following spring semester.

## **ARTICLE IX: OATH OF OFFICE**

The Oath of Office shall be administered to all elected officials by the SGA Supreme Court Chief Justice, or his/her Associate Chief Justice, as follows:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, having been duly elected/appointed as \_\_\_\_\_ (insert office or title here) of the Student Government Association of Tennessee Tech University, and ever mindful of the public trust invested in me, do hereby swear to uphold the Constitutional rights, the SGA Constitution and By-Laws, and the liberties of the students.

## **ARTICLE X: VACANCIES AND REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

### **Section 1 – Executive Officer Vacancy**

- A. When a vacancy occurs in any elected SGA office other than that of the President, an ad hoc committee will be formed consisting of the President, the Vice President, the Chief Justice, and four (4) Members of the Senate chosen by the Executive Council.
- B. The appointment(s) shall be presented to the senate and ratified by a two-thirds vote.
- C. Appointment(s) shall be effective until the following spring semester election.

### **Section 2 – Senate Vacancy**

- A. When a vacancy occurs in the senate during the fall semester, the members of the college of the vacating senator shall convene to nominate a replacement by a majority vote of no less than 50% of the college's senators.
- B. This nominee shall then be approved by the President for a full floor vote and, if the President rejects a nominee, must provide the College with their reasoning to consider a different nominee.

- C. If the vacating senator was the sole senator from his or her college, or the college/school fails to nominate within two (2) weeks of the first business meeting after the resignation, the procedure for executive vacancies shall be followed.
- D. Appointments shall be effective until the spring semester election.
- E. Appointments shall be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the SGA Senate.
- F. If vacancies occur during the spring semester following winter break, vacancies will be filled in accordance with Article V, Section 4.

### **Section 3 – Impeachment**

- A. Any elected or appointed officer that has deviated from the qualifications for the office held or neglected his/her duties in office as described by the constitution and/or by-laws of SGA, misused his/her power or position for personal gain, or otherwise deviated from the professional ethics and standards of the SGA, may be impeached and if found responsible, removed from office.
- B. Impeachment proceedings may be initiated in the following ways:
  - 1. A majority vote of the SGA Senate.
  - 2. A petition of complaint filed with the Supreme Court. This petition may be filed by any student enrolled in at least one (1) credit hour and must have a minimum of twenty-five (25) signatures of students enrolled in at least one (1) credit hour.
- C. The SGA Supreme Court will convene to determine if impeachment proceeding should continue based on the petition and documentation submitted for impeachment.
- D. If the SGA Supreme Court determines by majority vote that impeachment proceedings should move forward, the Chief Justice shall deliver a notice of impeachment charges, in writing, to the elected or appointed officer subject to impeachment. The written impeachment charges shall include the date, time, and place of the impeachment hearing before the Senate. Such a hearing shall take place no earlier than three (3) business days after receipt of the written notice.
- E. The Senate shall determine based on preponderance of information if there is sufficient information the elected or appointed official is responsible of misconduct or neglect of office and may vote to impeach by 2/3 vote.
- F. The decision of the Senate shall be effective immediately upon communication to the impeached elected or appointed officer.

## **ARTICLE XI: MEETINGS**

### **Section 1 – Frequency**

The Senate will meet weekly, absent good cause. A schedule of meetings for a semester shall be created prior to the beginning of the semester and published on the website and social media.

### **Section 2 – Special Meetings**

The SGA President may call special meetings at any time for important matters with forty-eight hours' notice given to all members.

### **Section 3 – Quorum**

Quorum for consideration of business shall consist of two-thirds majority of the total voting members of the Senate. If a quorum is not present, voting shall be postponed until the next meeting.

## **ARTICLE XII: STUDENT ORGANIZATION LIFE OPPORTUNITY (S.O.L.O.) FUND**

### **Section 1 – Purpose and Scope**

To enrich and advance the quality of a complete college experience at Tennessee Tech University, by providing funds to any event or program deemed appropriate by the Student Organization Life Opportunity (S.O.L.O.) Fund committee.

The S.O.L.O. Fund shall provide funding for the following:

- A. A major campus event each fall and spring semesters, which shall be supported by the superfund.
- B. Registered student organizations applying for events on campus, to benefit the student life on campus and to recruit new members to their organization, shall come from the general fund.

### **Section 2 – Fees and Collection**

A fee of thirty (\$30) dollars is collected from all students enrolled in at least three (3) hours of course credit in the fall and spring semester. No fee will be collected during the summer terms.

### **Section 3 – Fund Allocations**

The S.O.L.O. Fund shall consist of two accounts: a general fund and a superfund.

- A. The general fund shall be a means, which registered student organizations may receive funding for student activities.
- B. The superfund shall provide for at least one major campus event each semester.
- C. Eighty-five percent (85%) of money generated by the student derived S.O.L.O. fund shall go into the superfund, with the remaining fifteen percent (15%) allocated the general operating fund.
- D. All unused funds will roll over to the next fiscal year and stay in the S.O.L.O. fund.

### **Section 4 – Use of SOLO Funds**

This fund shall in no way be considered an operating fund for the Student Government Association.

### **Section 5 – Procedures for Distribution of SOLO Funds**

The procedures for application and distribution of general funds and major campus events funded by the superfund are outlined in the SGA By-laws.

### **ARTICLE XIII: STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

The SGA shall comply with all Tennessee Tech, Tennessee Tech Board, and local, state, and federal regulations.

### **ARTICLE XIV: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern parliamentary procedure to be used in meetings when business matters are in order.

### **ARTICLE XV: AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended after a vote of two-thirds approval of voting membership of the SGA Senate, approval from the President, approval of the SGA Advisor with review and affirmative action by the Student Affairs Committee and Administrative Council.